AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH

SOCCER

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'No Shootout This Time' – Says Corry

South Melbourne's international classy central marker, Mehmet Durakovic (left), flies in with a block tackle to impede Sydney Olympic's striker Nick Carle, last Sunday at Olympic Park. Souths won 2-0.

By John Economos

RONNIE CORRY, Wollongong's low key coach, strongly believes that a repeat of last year's Grand Final situation played over in Perth, which Wollongong won through that nerve-racking and dreadful penalty-shoot out, will certainly not happen again.

Wollongong in last year's sensational Grand Final, chased the Glory's 3-0 lead they'd rattled up by halftime to level the scoreline and send the match into penalties.

"This time round it will not go that far," Corry assured ABSW last night.

"I expect South Melbourne to give us a very hard game and we will be ready for this on Sunday.

"Our two wins, (both legs 2-1), over Souths in the Major Semi finals mean absolutely nothing as far as Sunday's Grand Final is concerned.

"Both teams are the very best in the country and there is very little between them.

"There is nothing easy about any Grand Finals," the highly experienced Wollongong coach and former Australian World Cup goalkeeper stressed to us.

Sydney Olympic's goalkeeper Clint Bolton flies through the air in a vain attempt to stop Con Boutsianis goal-bound shot which registered the first goal for South Melbourne last Sunday at Olympic Park.

Reid, ABSW's 'Player Of The Year'

By John Economos

PAUL REID, Wollongong Wolves' outstanding attacking midfielder, last night nailed down ABSW's 'Player Of The Year' award, pipping Marconi's international midfielder Angelo Costanzo by two points.

The 21 year old mobile midfielder last night was rated by his coach Ronnie Corry as "the very best young prospect in the country."

Corry also went on to add: "Paul came to us almost two years ago from the Macarthur region in Sydney and we promoted him into the first team squad the same year. Last season was his first full season as a regular first grader.

"Paul is a wonderful and very special talent," ended Corry a highly astute judge of quality young players.

In third spot was the Brisbane Strikers' brilliant Brazilian linkman, Fernando Rech who scored 23 points with the Glory's and the National League's top marksman, Damian Mori scoring 22 points. South Melbourne's magical midfielder Zeljko Susa finished in fifth spot with 20 points.

ABSW's journalists throughout the season, progressively voted at each NSL match on a 3-2-1 system.

(See Page 12 for more on 'Player Of The Year').

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Bobby won't appeal NSL fine

Perth Glory striker, Bobby Despotovski has accepted National Soccer League Disciplinary Tribunal's finding and will not be appealing the decision which hit him with a $2,000 fine and a six-month suspended sentence in the event of a similar incident.

A statement from the club, released by Tony Di Francesco, a director of Perth Glory, noted that Soccer Australia did not charge Despotovski with any offence relating to the incitement of violence in the aftermath of the crowd trouble which marred the May 6, 2001 NSL game between Glory and Melbourne Knights.

The statement added that Despotovski was now keen to move forward and concentrate on the forthcoming season and will make no further comments in relation to the Disciplinary Tribunal's findings.

Last week, the NSL Disciplinary Tribunal, ruled that Perth Glory Despotovski was found guilty of the charge of bringing the League or Game into disrepute as a result of a gesture made during the NSL match on 6th May 2001 against Melbourne Knights.

The Tribunal at a hearing which lasted over 4.5 hours, determined that:

- The player has been fined $2000
- The player has also been given a suspended sentence of six (6) matches, which will apply if he is convicted of a similar offence.
- The suspended sentence will be in addition to any other penalty determined at the time by a Tribunal.
- The suspended sentence is to remain in force until 30th June 2002.

Bobby Despotovski: Content with NSL ruling.

Live telecast for Grand Final

Soccer Australia has announced that the 2001 National Soccer League Grand Final will be broadcast live on the Seven Network on Sunday June 3.

The game is set down for a midday kick-off at Parramatta Stadium, between the Wollongong Wolves, and South Melbourne.

Following discussions with the Seven Network, confirmation of the live telecast of the NSL Grand Final has been approved by the Board of Soccer Australia. Soccer Australia Chairman Tony Labbozzetta in a statement, stated:

"This is a particularly important match in Australia's sporting calendar, and it is vital that the sporting public is presented with the best possible product.

"Wollongong has already shown Australia the champion team it is, particularly with the remarkable result in last season's Grand Final, and whoever their opponent may be, the match will undoubtedly be extremely entertaining.

"We all anticipate there will be keen interest in the game from right around Australia, and welcome the opportunity to take the Grand Final to as many viewers as possible."

A decision as to whether the match will be broadcast live in Sydney will be made at a later date, subject to ticket sales.

Soccer Canberra dare SA over Cosmos' plight

By Graham Cooke

A letter written by Soccer Canberra president, Steve Doszpot to his Soccer Australia counterpart, Tony Labbozetta, has implications far beyond its intention of putting pressure on the national body to retain the Canberra Cosmos club in the National Soccer League.

In it, Doszpot warns that Soccer Canberra may sue for compensation if Soccer Australia proceeds with their stated aim of expelling the Cosmos.

By doing so SA will 'put at risk our major investment', he writes. "Consequently we wish to put Soccer Australia on notice that our federation may seek compensation from Soccer Australia should the Cosmos be excluded from the National Soccer League."

There is no doubting Soccer Canberra's involvement is substantial. In the first year of the Cosmos' operations, in 1995, they virtually bankrolled the club and some estimates have put their total investment at more than $800,000.

More recently they have been trying to offload some of that by negotiating with a European club to buy part of their stake.

Needless to say, little progress has been made with the Cosmos remaining uncertain of their position next season.

Most people on both sides of the argument hope the impasse does not end up in the courts, but if it did and there was a finding in favour of Soccer Canberra, the repercussions would be enormous.

It would leave the way open for sponsors to sue the national body if the club they backed were threatened with expulsion. This would effectively limit, if not entirely remove, Soccer Australia's ability to make any involuntary changes in membership in the future.

That may be going beyond what Soccer Canberra intends, with Doszpot pointing out that it was Soccer Australia, under former chairman David Hill, who requested an entry from Canberra into what was then a restructured NSL.

Doszpot described the 1995 entry as 'premature' and said it caused 'extreme hardships to our federation and our member clubs'. However, the Soccer Canberra president at the time, Ron Watkins, was impatient for entry to take place and expressed regret when Soccer Australia decided it should not proceed a year earlier.

SOCCEROOS' CONFEDERATION CUP FIXTURES

Date:	Kick-off (Local Time)	Kick-off (AEST)	Match:	Venue:
30-05-01	17:00	18:00	France vs Korea Republic	Daegu, Korea
30-05-01	*19:30*	*20:30*	*Mexico vs Australia*	*Suwan, Korea*
01-06-01	*17:00*	*18:00*	*Australia vs France*	*Daegu, Korea*
01-06-01	19:30	20:30	Korea Republic vs Mexico	Ulsan, Korea
03-06-1	19:30	20:30	France vs Mexico	Ulsan, Korea
03-06-01	*19:30*	*20:30*	*Korea Republic vs Australia*	*Suwan, Korea*

Miyazawa is Cosmos' Player-of-the-Year

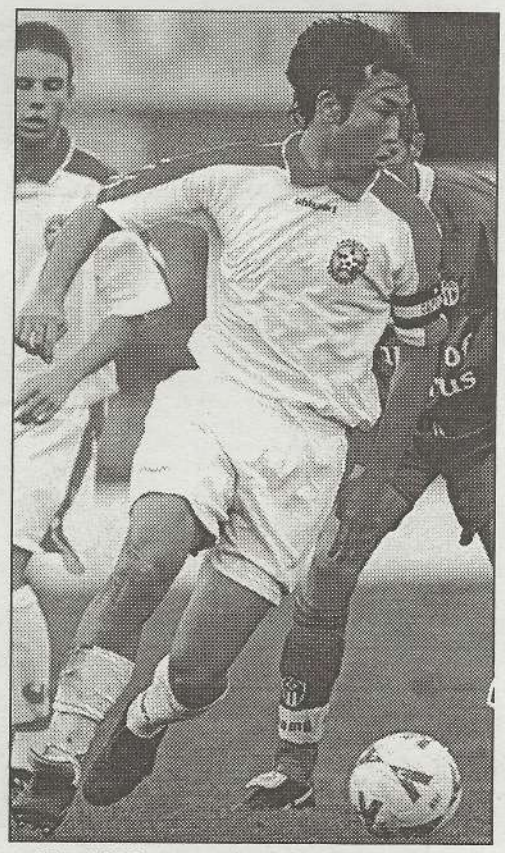
By Graham Cooke

Japanese defender Hiroshi Miyazawa, who was not signed until the season was one quarter over, was named the Canberra Cosmos Player of the Year at the club's presentation night last week.

Miyazawa, brought to the Cosmos by former coach Tom Sermanni, was a model of consistency, and did not miss a game until a suspension cost him an appearance in the last round.

Attacking midfielder Alex Castro was chosen as Players' Player, and picked up the Golden Boot for his 10 goals in 26 appearances; defender Con Anthopoulos, who came to the club from the ruins of Carlton, received the coach's award.

It was no surprise that Milton Cortes was named Supporters Player of the Year. Despite beginning many games on the bench, the little Uruguayan usually contributed spectacularly when he got on the field, delighting the spectators with his incisive and occasionally match-winning contributions.


Hiroshi Miyazawa: Canberra Cosmos' best playerof 2000/2001 season.

CORRECTION

In our story last week, titled, 'Crook steps-in at Newcastle,' it was reported that Leon Gardikiotis was an ex-rugby player.

We wish to categorically state here that Gardikiotis was never a rugby player. The error is deeply regretted.

U/20 SOCCEROOS FLY-IN WITH HEROIC SILVER

Australiaís U/20 Socceroos will arrive home this morning (Tuesday), following their successful East Asia Games tournament in Japan.

The Australian based members of the side will arrive into Sydney, resting for four days before the squadís departure to Chile for camp, prior to the FIFA World Youth Championships in Argentina in mid-June.

The Australian Under-20s had performed creditably-well, only going down to the home nation Japan 2-1, in the Final of the East Asia Games on Sunday night

After Japan went one up on the half hour, Australian Franco Parisi scored his second goal of the tournament seven minutes later, shooting home from twelve metres.

Japan sealed the game with less than ten minutes to go, after a free kick curled around the Australian wall and goalkeeper Michael Turnbull.

"We didn't play too badly, but we showed how tired we were in the second half," said coach Ange Postecoglou after the game.

"The boys played four games in a week, so it was a hectic schedule for them.

"The tournament was a good experience for us we played a good competition against good teams, and we all learnt a bit more about each other."

Paul Trimboli - South Melbourne captain.

Panapoulos Doubtful For Souths

By Bert van Bedaf.

SOUTH Melbourne goes into the grand final with midfielder Steve Panopoulos in doubt because of a hamstring injury.

"Panopoulos has a hamstring injury and other than that everyone else is fine," South coach Mike Petersen said after the game.

Petersen substituted Panopoulos at half-time with captain Paul Trimboli, who until then had been warming the bench to the surprise of everyone, except Petersen.

"All year, we've mixed (players). We established early on that we have a strong squad. It's a collection of energies. It's an 18-man squad,"

Petersen said before revealing why he decided to change his starting eleven from the ones who lost 2-1 twice to Wollongong in the previous finals matches.

"We tried it the first two games against Wollongong and it wasn't working. Really, this (against Olympic) was our formation we hadn't tried before and we felt we give it a go," Petersen said.

South played a 4-3-3 formation with Simon Colosimo as a sweeper. Also in defence were Fausto De Amicis, Mehmet Durakovic and Steve Iosifidis.

In midfield were Panopoulos, Con Boutsianis and Zeljko Susa. While, up front were Andy Vlahos, Vas Kalogeracos and Vaughan Coveny.

"The maturity of the players makes us a champion team. It is the ability to put personal disappointment (aside) and there's no bigger exponent than our captain.

Ever the polite and self-effacing individual, Trimboli looked a blushing novice when asked about his shock omission.

"I didn't know until we got to the ground, actually," Trimboli said.

"Initially, I was disappointed. Obviously, you want to be on the field. Then I said (to myself), I'm the leader of this group, I've got to get itm together and try in any way I can to help out.

"I'm just thrilled we're in another grand final (South's third in four years). We stuffed up the last couple of weeks, but we were hard at it today. If we bring the trophy back to Bob Jane (home stadium), everybody is going to get their hands on it and that includes me as everybody else," he said.

South Melbourne coach Mike Petersen (left).

LETHAL LEMEZINA SINKS CREEK

By Graham Cooke.

Tony Lemezina, whose skills become more elegant with age, sank Weston Creek Royals with a three-minute hat trick in the ACT Premiership game at Woden Park Oval on Sunday.

League leaders Canberra Deakin had been making hard work of the match against a young and well-organised Creek defence until Lemezina struck in the 58th 60th and 61st minutes.

The first would have been recognisable to any supporter who has followed his career through the National and NSW leagues, after taking a pass from Paul Gagetti he wriggled past three defenders, sold a dummy to give himself some shooting space and struck the ball firmly past goalkeeper Peter Flores.

Two minutes later he was at it again, chipping a cross from Geoff Howarth over Floresí head, and within seconds he had completed the hat trick, this time with a header off Scott Manson.

Until then Deakin had looked uncomfortable as they toiled to break down a stubborn defence in which Rowan Telford and Danny Webb played outstanding roles. Their opening goal, after 25 minutes, followed an intense burst of pressure. Then it was Manson, showing he has not lost his ability to swoop in from midfield to add decisive weight to the front line, shooting through a ruck of players into the net.

Creek assistant coach Andy Diggle said it was a shame his side had spoilt a good all-round effort with three minutes of lapsed concentration. ìWeíre a very young team who are improving and weíve just played the top three in the competition,î he said

ìThe other game we played we won, so thereís still reason to hope that we can make an impression on the competition.î

Deakin team boss Vid Horvat said the club are working towards moving into a higher level of soccer, ìbut in the meantime we cannot afford not to respect this competition and the teams we play in it.

ìOur future is with the younger players of which we have many good talents, and when the time is ripe I will begin to introduce them.î

Deakin found themselves with a four-point lead at the top of the Premiership after Gungahlin Juventus spoilt their 100 per cent record and clean goals against sheet in a shock 3-1 loss to the University of Canberra.

Damian Ruitenbery (2) and Jason Markezic did the damage for the students, Steve Lazzari replied from the penalty spot.

Canberra Olympic moved up on Juventusí heels with a 2-1 win over Belconnen United thanks to two goals from Danny Macor, Daniel Camara scoring for the Bels. Monaro are also in the top four after a 6-0 trouncing of bottom club Tuggeranong United, their goals coming from Jimmy Baxter, Mat Jullienne, Danny Byrne, Ilija Prenzoski, Lazar Simenov and an own goal.

ACT PREMIERSHIP LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Canberra Deakin	**5**	**4**	**1**	**0**	**16**	**4**	**13**
Gungahlin Juventus	4	3	0	1	14	3	9
Canberra Olympic	5	3	0	2	12	8	9
Monaro	4	3	0	1	9	6	9
Capital City Suns	4	3	0	1	11	9	8
University of Canberra	4	1	1	2	8	8	4
Belconnen United	5	1	0	4	5	10	3
Weston Creek Royals	4	1	0	3	4	17	3
Tuggeranong United	5	0	0	5	4	17	0

Capital City Lose Danny

By Graham Cooke.

ACT Premiership contenders Capital City Suns have suddenly found themselves short of firepower after striker Danny Gjorgievski's request to be transferred to Queanbeyan City.

Suns coach Bill Dojcinoski said Gjorgievski, formerly a star goal-scorer for the club, had not been able to train regularly because of work commitments and consequently had spent a good part of this season on the bench.

However, he played a full 90 minutes and scored in the recent game with Tuggeranong United, showing signs of retuning to his old form.

"Danny has decided to drop down a division to the ACT State League and play for Queanbeyan, where regular training is not a strict requirement," the coach said.

His departure comes on top of an injury to the livewire Steve Lee, who fractured a collarbone against the University of Canberra earlier in the season.

BILL TURNER CUP

ROUND 1

Crestwood	3	Galston	0
Castle Hill (3-2 Penalties)	0	William Clarke College	0
Cromer	7	Pittwater	1
Heathcote	2	Lucas Heights	1
Jannali	3	Gymea	1
Maroubra	3	Vaucluse	0
J J Cahill (5-4 Penalties)	1	Randwick Boys	1
Penrith	3	Kingswood	0
Christ Catholic	4	Mamre Christian	0
John Wycliffe Christian		6Glenmore Park	1
McCarthy Catholic	3	Cambridge Park	0
Mitchell	6	Quakers Hill	2
Kogarah	2	Dulwich	1
Kingsgrove North	3	Belmore Boys	0
Greystanes	8	Girraween	1
Parramatta	3	Seven Hills	0
Freeman Catholic	3	Fairfield	0
Pat Bros. Fairfield	4	Cecil Hills	0
East Hills Boys	9	Lurnea	0
Scone Grammar	2	Scone	1
St Catherines	3	Singleton	0
Muswellbrook	3	Kurri Kurri	0
Cessnock	3	Mount View	2
St Josephs Lochinvar	1	Maitland Grossman	0
Maitland	3	Rutherford	1
St Peters Maitland	3	St Josephs Aberdeen	0
Lambton	4	Wallsend	1
Hunter Sports	1	Warners Bay	0
Canowindra	2	Cowra	0
Willyama	3	Broken Hill	0
St Johns Dubbo	def	South Dubbo	
Ulladulla	2	St Johns Nowra	1
Keira	6	Woonona	2
Moss Vale	2	Shoalhaven	1
Warrawong	7	Wollongong	0
St Francis Xavier	6	Mackillop	0
Gold Creek	5	Yass	1
Stromlo	6	Queanbeyan	1
Belconnen	3	Crookwell	0
Marist	2	Ginninderra	0
Daramalan	2	Campbell	1
Canberra	6	Trinity Catholic	2
Lanyon	3	Trinity Christian	2

ROUND 2

Balgowlah Boys	5	Pennant Hills	2
Killara	6	Killarney Heights	1
St Augustines	1	Narrabeen Sports	0
John Wycliffe	2	St Pauls Grammar	0
Colo	3	Hawkesbury	2
Birong Boys	5	Marrickville	0
DLS Ashfield	8	Canterbury Boys	1
Kogarah	4	Kingsgrove North	1
Thomas Reddall	6	Airds	3
St Johns Park	5	Casula	1
Miller Tech	2	Good Samaritan	1

Petersen Eyes Change

By Bert van Bedaf

South Melbourne coach Mike Petersen wants a change in how the system determines the national champion.

A purist and not a great fan of the finals system, Petersen advocated two titles, one for the champion who finishes on top after the home and away rounds and another for the winner of the top-six finals series.

"Anywhere in the world we call it league champions. Here we call it minor premiers. I just don't think we've got that right," Petersen said.

"Having said that, Australians like finals. But we've got to rethink who we consider to be our champion team. Maybe we should call it our League champion and our Cup champion.

"I don't think it would diminish too much from the excitement. You can win the League and Cup double. The powers that be (Soccer Australia) have got to realise that and understand that," he said.

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

By John Economos

THE NSL last week released the prices it has decided to charge for this Sunday's Grand Final between Wollongong Wolves and South Melbourne at the Parramatta Stadium.

For the end of this season's big battle, which involves two 'away teams', 37 bucks plus a booking fee for Reserved seating seems a bit too rich to slug the fans with.

Student, pensioners and concession tickets will cost 20 bucks plus a booking fee if purchased through Ticketek.

Children between the ages of 5 and 14 years of age, again 20 bucks.

Unreserved adult tickets to sit on one of the two 'hill areas'-no seating, (behind the goals), will cost $22:00.

Why on Earth didn't the NSL, prior to last Sunday's match, book both the Parramatta Stadium as well as the WIN Stadium?

The League then could have sat back and waited for last Sunday's result between Souths and Sydney Olympic.

Had Olympic won, it would have, (to some reasonable extent), justified staging the Grand Final at the Parramatta Stadium.

However now that Olympic failed to qualify, automatically the NSL should have elected the WIN Stadium for this Sunday's Big Match.

As it is now, no way will the Grand Final IN Sydney attract more than 10,000, (12,000 max), which is comfortably less than WIN Stadium's capacity.

Having said all this, morally the WIN Stadium should have staged this Sunday's Grand Final, with, or without Sydney Olympic in it.

That of course is, if one was serious about being fair and honest to Wollongong.

The regulations, (for years), clearly state that the team that qualifies first for the Grand Final, will have the 'home venue.'

Nsl logo.

◆◆◆◆

Last Sunday's surprisingly low, (6,664), crowd at Olympic Park, must have the NSL very concerned for Sunday's Grand Final expectations at the Parramatta Stadium

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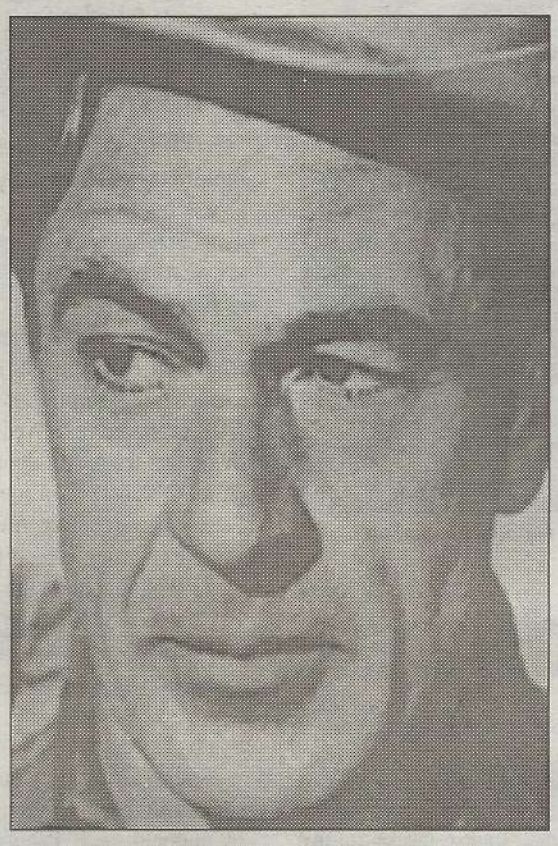
WHY on Earth have we been slammed with a noon kick-off for Sunday's Grand Final?



GARY COOPER: Will he be at Sunday's Grand Final?

To accommodate a Live telecast offered by the Seven Network?

Yes, we're told that the Seven Network could only fit Soccer in this time-slot, if we wished to have our Grand Final transmitted Live.

What does Soccer really owe the Seven Network for God's sake?

All season, (with monotonous, and impeccable regularity), the Seven Network has treated the Australian Soccer fraternity, with sheer and utmost contempt, rigidly screening a one hour NSL highlight package just AFTER midnight every Tuesday. With monotonous regularity.

The 'grave-yard shift' that has zero ratings.

Despite an avalanche of protests flooding in from Joe Public all year, Seven has rigidly refused to budge to date.

Yet here we are, (and on Grand Final Day least of all), bowing down to the Seven Network's 'take it, or leave it' offer to have our Grand Final kicking off at noon.

A historic, and a most ridiculous, first in Australian Soccer.

The real truth of the matter is simply this.

Seven could not have cared less whether to broadcast the Grand Final, or not-(Live or Delayed).

The commercial Network in fact tried to dump it onto SBS, but most rightly so, SBS that's been always treated like crap by Soccer Australia from Day One, flatly rejected to 'carry' the Grand Final.

The Wollongong fans, the South Melbourne fans plus both playing squads don't like the noon kick-off.

So now, any Victorian fan wishing to attend the Sydney Grand Final, must get up at the crack of dawn, fly to Sydney and make the long track out to Parramatta to be there before the noon kick-off.

So we are stuck with a noon start, as Seven on Sundays commences its Live coverage of the AFL at 2 pm sharp.

Great.

'Good Oil' now simply questions, what will happen if Sunday's Grand Final, after regulation time, ends in a draw, and that after 30 minutes of extra-time played, it's still a draw?

That would force the match, (as was the case last year), to go into a dreadful 'penalty-shoot-out'.

Should this ultimate scenario crystallise, (and why couldn't it, as it already happened last season), Seven could find itself in real trouble when it's time to make the 'cross' to AFL.

Remember, with a NOON kick off, plus two hours of play, plus a possible penalty shoot-out, plus the trophy and medal presentations, we already have whizzed well past the 2 pm kick off Seven has slotted for the AFL coverage.

One may ask what would be an intelligent solution?

Simple.

Kick-off the Grand Final at 5pm, AFTER the AFL, or play it on Saturday night.

Come Sunday 12 pm, the turnstiles at the Parramatta Stadium will be the 'Judge and Jury' on this potential fracas.

Should the Grand Final crowd figure ends up being very poor, the two competing, cash-strapped teams, (and which NSL teams aren't?), could find they've been literally 'ambushed'.

This could next week lead to a real gunfight with Club officials that may more than rival the magnificent 1952 Western Classic starring Gary Cooper, 'High Noon'.

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SUNDAY's winner of the Grand Final is impossible to pick.

Take no notice that Wollongong defeated Souths 2-1 in both legs of the Major Semi-finals.

Sunday's clash at the Parramatta Stadium is a one-off battle and anything can happen.

Remember last year's Grand Final when the Glory led 3-0, and at 'home' even?

Going much further back, even before the formation of the NSL, in the1969 NSW Grand Final, the great St George Budapest led the also great Apia 2-0 and with just nine minutes left to fulltime.

Apia WON that Grand Final, courtesy of a spectacular Ernie Campbell hat-trick.

Far more recently, the last England F.A. Cup Final saw the Arsenal dominate for most of the match, against Liverpool.

We all now know what happened.

It will take a very brave man to pick Sunday's winner at the Parramatta Stadium.

Both teams are excellent. The two very best in Australia all season.

Both coaches, (Ronnie Corry and Mickey Petersen), are excellent and both have enormous international experience as former players for Australia.

Right now however, it's almost certain that Wollongong's lethal left mid-fielder Scotty Chipperfield, will be 'missing in action', whilst currently on national duty over in Korea with the Australian team for the Confederation Cup.

SCOTTY CHIPPERFIELD:Is he be back in time for the Grand Final?

Will national manager Frank Farina, be considerate and reluctantly release 'Chippers' early, to return to Sydney for the Grand Final on Sunday?

On Sunday night Australia has been scheduled to play against the host nation, Korea.

Chipperfield is as vitally important to the Wollongong unit as Con Boutsianis is to Souths.

Imagine Souths taking the pitch on Sunday without 'Boutsy'.

◆◆◆◆

SYDNEY OLYMPIC's Youth team this Thursday afternoon departs on a ten day-four match tour of Malaysia.

The tour is the brain-child of Olympic's Youth coach, Michael Urukalo, who coached in Malaysia for three years.

The fitness-mad Urukalo won the 'magic double', (the Malaysian League Championship as well as the Malaysia F.A. Cup Final) in 1992 with the Johor F.A. team that included former Olympic star strikers, Alistair Edwards and Abbas Saad.

A farewell dinner will be held for the Olympic Youth team tomorrow, (Wednesday), night at the Sydney Olympic Sporting Club at Hurlstone Park.

MICHAEL URUKALO: Olympic's Youth team coach.

Mr Peter Georges, Managing Director of Mega Travel, will handle the entire tour, flying the team in and out of Kuala Lumpur with Malaysian Airline Services.

(Further details of Olympic's tour on page 7).

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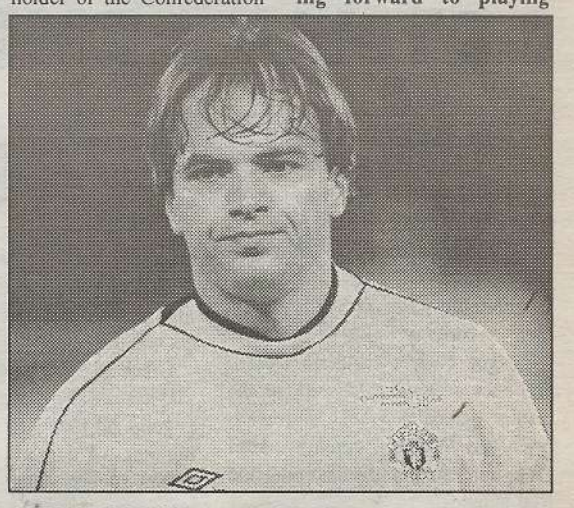
NATIONS CONFEDERATION CUP starts this week.

Australia has been drawn against France, Korea and Mexico for the Group A games of the 2001 Confederation of Nations Cup that kicks off tomorrow, (Wednesday), May 30th ending on June 10 in Japan and Korea.

FIFA's latest World ratings have Australia listed in 68th position, Mexico 13th, France No1 and the South Korean in 39th spot.

Australia's first match is against Mexico tomorrow, (Wednesday), night at 7.30pm.

Mexico is the current holder of the Confederation Cup, having won it in Mexico City in front of a hysterical crowd of 110,000, cocooned inside the giant Aztec Stadium on the night of 4th July, 1999.



MARK BOSNICH: Australia's Super hero in the first Confederation Cup (1999) tournament.

That evening, the Mexicans downed Brazil 4-3 in the Final to lift the Cup.

This was the second ever Confederation Cup staged.

The first Confederation Cup tournament was in1997 and staged in Saudi Arabia.

In that 1997 Final, hat-tricks scored by the ruthlessly running duo of Romario and Ronaldo, saw Australia quickly crushed 6-0 by Brazil, despite the heroic deeds once again by Australia's goalkeeper, Mark Bosnich.

Bosnich in the first round of that tournament had kept Brazil scoreless.

Entirely due to Bosnich's super-human exhibition between the uprights, Australia was able to pull off an unbelievable 0-0 draw against the World's giants.

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The Confederation Cup draw is as follows:

Group A:

May 30th.

France vs Korea Republic-5 pm-Daegu, Korea.

Australia vs Mexico-7.30 pm-Suwan, Korea.

(Live on Optus 8.30pm, replay on SBS May 31st 10pm.

June 1st.

Australia vs France- 5 pm-Daegu, Korea.

(Live on Optus 6 pm, replay on SBS June 2 at 10.pm).

Korea Republic vs Mexico-7.30 pm-Ulsan, Korea.

June 3rd.

France vs Mexico-7.30 pm-Ulsan, Korea.

Korea Republic vs Australia-7.30 pm-Suwan, Korea.

(Live on Optus 8.20pm, replay on SBS June 4th at 10pm).

Kick off times are all in local Korean time.

All Optus Live telecasting time slots above are in Australian times).

Australia's coach Frank Farina , stated :"I was originally happy with the draw, and now still am. I'm looking forward to playing some good, quality teams.

"I'm also happy with the order of the matches, playing the Mexicans first, followed by France and then the home side (Korean Republic).

"All seven teams in the tournament are ranked above us and are all quality teams. In the end it didn't matter which Group we were drawn in. It's going to be tough, but we're not worried about that," ended Farina.

The Group B matches which will all be played in Japan, are follows:

May 31st.

Brazil vs Cameroon-5 pm-Ibaraki, Japan.

Japan vs Canada-7.30 pm-Niigata, Japan.

June 2nd.

Canada vs Brazil-5 pm-Ibaraki, Japan.

Cameroon vs Japan-7.30 pm-Niigata, Japan.

June 4th.

Brazil vs Japan-7.30 pm-Ibaraki, Japan.

Cameroon vs Canada-7.30 pm-Niigata, Japan.

FRANK FARINA: Australia's coach happy with the draw.

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil

PAUL OKON: Australia's captain in Korea.

PAUL OKON, Australia's captain, arrived in Korea from England to join Frank Farina's squad last Saturday.

The Aussie skipper and dynamic midfielder, on landing stated at a media conference: "I think that these days, at international level, there are no easy games, so I don't think that France will be underestimating us and I don't think any other team will underestimate us.

"We have seen in the past when teams have done that against Australia, we've come up and beaten them.

"So it's fantastic that we have the opportunity to play against these teams and it will be a good test."

The Aussie ace went on to add: "We have three certain games in this tournament, against Mexico, France and Korea.

"That can only help us, because at the end of the day, the ambition, the goal, is to qualify for the World Cup come November.

"So I guess these, (matches), are just little steps on the way to achieving that," ended the brilliant Middlesbrough midfielder.

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ONE is forced to have some sympathetic feelings for Marconi's departing coach, Eddie Krncevic, having last week lost his job on account that the team 'failed' to do extra well this season.

With such high Marconi expectations placed on his shoulders, Krncevic, (always the optomist), had carried on regardless.

Having drafted many new players to the Club, it was always going to take time for the 'fresh' squad to bond.

Compounding Krncevic's dilemma, halfway through the season, the Club sold in quick succession, two of its key midfielders to European clubs.

EDDIE KRNCEVIC: Forced to pay the penalty.

' First to go was the steely Chad Gibson, and he was then followed by the robust and most mobile Darren McDonald.

Towards the end of the season, Krncevic had to also endure the loss of the services of his rock-hard midfielder, or marker, Buddy Farah.

Twice the ferocious Farah left the Marconi squad for duty with the national team of Lebanon.

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THE PARRAMATTA POWER who over the past two weeks have been busy with off-season tours embracing China first then Singapore, will be staging their Season 2000-001 Awards Luncheon on Thursday, June 7th at 12 pm.

Squad members, full coaching staff, official guests plus members of the Soccer media will be wined and dined in the 'Wentworth Room' at the Parramatta Leagues Club.

The Power squad took off for China two weeks ago to play two friendly games. Some 300 million Chinese watched the sold-out match against the national League Champions of

MIKE GIBSON: The Power's ever-green former international goalkeeper.

China, Shangdong Lulun on Pay t.v where the Chinese defeated the Power 1-0 in a tense battle played at Qingdao in the second match of the tour.

In their first game, the Power defeated Yunan Hongta by 3-4 in a penalty shoot-out in yet another sold out match.

The Power returned home last week for just 48 hours before taking off again last Thursday, bound for Singapore.

This time the Power's Head coach David Mitchell, left for Singapore with a compact squad of just 10 players.

The Power most successfully competed in the very prestigious Singapore Cricket Club Soccer Sevens International Tournament which the Power ultimately won.

The mini squad that competed in the two day Singapore tournament, included youngsters Brett Holman, Liam Reddy, Matt Thompson and Luke Roodenburg who were braced with experienced campaigners Alex Tobin, Joe Vrkic, Damien Brown, Nick Orlic, Milan Blagojevic, plus the ever-green and former international goalkeeper, Mike Gibson.

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Whilst on the subject of Annual Awards, MARCONI's Awards Night this season has been set down to be held on Wednesday, June 13th with kick-off listed at 7.30pm.

The Marconi Awards evenings have traditionally been spectacular events with guests served a sumptious four course dinner whilst being entertained by special guest entertainers.

Last year's Awards night was attended by almost 600 guests that saw former captain Brad Maloney take out the major trophy.

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DOMINIC LONGO: Marconi's captain.

GERARD HOULLIER, the amazing and hugely successful team manager of Liverpool, was a surprise V.I.P. visitor last Sunday at Australia's afternoon training session in Korea.

The portly Frenchman that this year absolutely rocked the roots of Anfield, has been engaged by FIFA to work in the Technical Department for the current Confederations Cup.

The presently very happy Houllier, (having completed his historic hat-trick of Cup Final victories for Liverpool this season), met up with Australia's young national manager, Frank Farina.

The scene was unique.

The French battle-hardened pro, meeting up with Australia's fledgling national manager.

The two managers, vastly years apart, let alone international experience, met for a brief technical meeting before Australia's Sunday afternoon training session started.

Later, Houllier even attended Australia's training session.

Needless to say, sensing that the one and only,

By John Economos

Monsieur Houllier was actually on the sidelines watching them, the entire Australian squad trained right out of their skins.

And the Red's 'Big Gerry' didn't utter a single word.

That's how amazingly, and silently explosive, was Houllier's sheer presence.

Maybe Soccer Australia would be wise to extend an invite to 'Big Gerry' in the capacity of 'official Australian supporter' to travel with our national squad on 'The Road To Japan/Korea 2002'.

The concept could be 'tres bon'.

And with the 'Big Frog' on board, maybe Australia could get the jump over our South American challenger, come November.

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AUSTRALIA's Under 20s side last Sunday night went down to home side Japan 2-1 in the Final of the East Asia Games.

After 30 minutes, Japan hit the front but Australia quickly bounced back and levelled in the 37 th minute through Sydney Olympic's attacking midfielder, Franco Parisi.

The teenaged Parisi scored from 12 metres out with his second goal of the tournament.

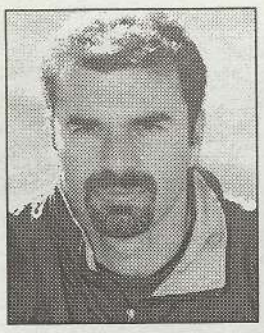
Ten minutes from the bell Japan regained the lead with a precision free kick that curled not only around the Australian 'wall' but also beat Marconi's stringbean goalkeeper, Michael Turnbull.

Australia's coach Angie Postecoglou later evaluated: "We didn't play too badly, but we showed how tired we were in the second half.

"The boys played four games in a week, so it was a hectic schedule for them.

"The tournament was a very good experience for us," ended Postecoglou.

The Young Australians



ANGIE POSTECOGLOU: Australia's Youth coach.

return home tomorrow morning, (Tuesday), at 7.55 am in Sydney, arriving from Osaka via Brisbane for a well earned four day rest before Postecoglou drafts them back into camp in Chile on June 2nd.

Then it's off to Argentina mid June where Australia will compete in FIFA's World Youth Championship Finals.

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ZORAN MATIC: coach of the 'Black and Whites'.

ADELAIDE CITY's Sports and Social Club Inc members overwhelmingly voted at a meeting last Sunday to give the Board Of Directors full authority to seek out investors to generate capital for the acquisition of Ram Park.

As well, permission was granted to raise further funds as working capital for the Club.

Despite some cheap rumours making the off-season rounds, Adelaide City's Master coach, Zoran Matic, will NOT be leaving the 'Black and Whites' for a second coaching stint over in Sydney with the currently coachless Marconi.

Former coach Eddie Krncevic and Marconi last week cordially parted company for next season.

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ANGELO COSTANZO, Marconi's talented international midfielder or marker, silently left last Friday for trials in Italy.

Little info has drifted out of the 'Palace' since his departure.

But 'Good Oil' understands that Costanzo had already trials targetted with Genoa and it's with that Club that he's trying his luck with his boots.

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THE WOLLONGONG WOLVES had their emotional, as well as financial hearts wrenched out last week when FIFA reluctantly had to pull the plug on the World Club Championships that were to have been held late in July in Spain.

But now it's almost certain that Ronnie Corry's Wollongong squad will receive some much-needed financial

RONNIE CORRY: His players will now be compensated by FIFA.

relief from 'Big Office' based in Zurich.

In a communique fired out last Sunday, FIFA has now declared that it will compensate the Spanish organisers plus the 12 clubs, (Wollongong included), that were initially to compete in the World Championships.

It appears that FIFA was forced to cancel this cash-lucrative tournament after the Brazilian marketing agency, 'Traffic', still owed FIFA some $70 million.

'Traffic' was to be responsible for the World Club Championships.

I.S.L., FIFA's marketing agency, also is causing problems for the World governing body of Soccer.

At a press conference, FIFA's president, Sepp Blatter, stated that 'FIFA would pay unspecified lump sums to the 12 clubs to help defray their costs. Organisers will also get a lump sum.'

Blatter confessed that given the uncertainty over ISL, FIFA had not wanted to risk footing the bill of up to $40 million.

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THE England F.A.Cup Final played earlier this month between the Arsenal and Liverpool, had a paradoxical ending.

But there was certainly nothing paradoxical about the PRICE of the official F.A. Cup Match Day Programme.

No less than 21 Aussie bucks per copy, if you please.

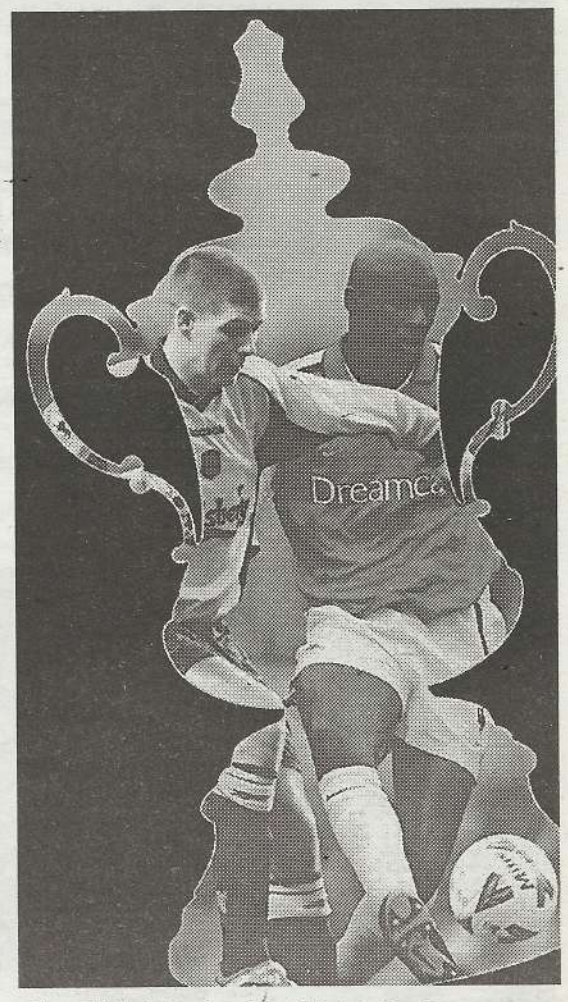
But what a classy product.

Containing no less than114, (almost blinding), glossy pages, every single page is in full colour.

The programme has been so meticulously compiled, it embraces nothing less than an encyclopaedic level of information on the F.A. Cup.

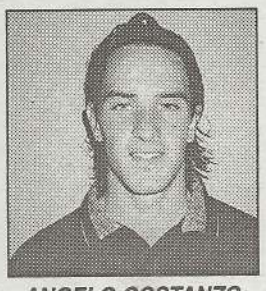
The F.A. Cup programme is absolutely crammed with what first appears to be a ream of historical stats, profiles, flashbacks, advertisements, full colour-plated action photos, plus most informative, and well written valuable stories.

If any of our readers have never seen such a product, it can easily and brielfy be described.



The Official F.A. Cup Final Match Day Programme-astounding.

GERARD HOULLIER: Liverpool's hat-trick of Cup Finals manager with Australia in Korea last Sunday.



ANGELO COSTANZO: Off to Italy last Friday for trials.

To be Frank, Labozetta Calls It A Day

BY JOHN ECONOMOS

FRANK LABBOZZETTA after many, many years of unquestionable loyal devotion and service to his beloved Marconi, has finally called it a day and officially resigned from his position as Marconi's Secretary of Soccer late last week.

Mr Frank Labbozzetta, who as of last Sunday has now seen no less than 65 Summers, vacates his position at the Club with many mixed feelings.

Feelings heavily sprinkled with large dollops of nostalgia.

"I would like to thank many people that I've been connected with over the many long years I've had in Soccer.

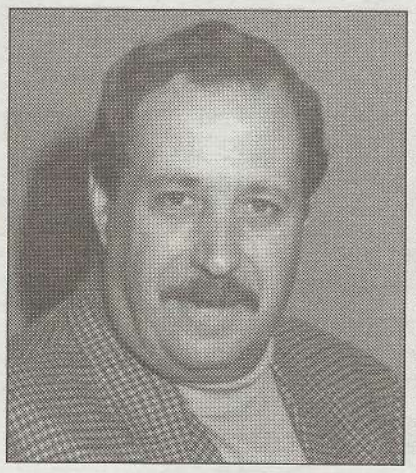
"There have been supporters, media people, sponsors etc that have all been there for me whenever I've wanted or needed them," an emotional Labbozzetta reflected to ABSW.

But what was the real reason for Frank's most sudden resignation?

Slowly but surely, an emotionally full Labbozzetta unravelled:

"I've been employed on a fulltime basis here at Marconi since 1993.

" One of the reasons I'm leaving is because there has of late, been a lot of political bashings going on around the place.



FRANK LABBOZZETTA—Leaves Marconi after 32 years.

"It's no secret that some new people on the Board of Directors have made me lose much of the passion I had whilst working for this Club.

"I could no longer give 100% of myself.

"So I thought it would be clearly the best move for me to depart now, and thus not prolong further agony.

" But here I must emphasise that I was 'not pushed out'.

"However I found myself in all honesty, being undermined too many times which hadn't previously been the case.

"So for the benefit of the Club ,I thought long and hard, it would be best for me to resign from my position," Labbozzetta offered to explain.

Although Labbozzetta has been in a paid position for the past almost nine years, his connection and service to the Club goes back many more years.

"When I tookover the Soccer side of the Club, I improved things in many areas such as lifting the overall value and number of sponsorships.

" Today, Marconi probably has more sponsorships in total as well as in monetary terms than any other club in the whole of Australia.

"Here I would like to take the opportunity to thank Club Marconi for the opportunity it has given me in a position where I've been able to make many friends, including some from all over the World."

What would Frank Labbozzetta rate as some of the highlights he's experienced whilst employed with Marconi?

"There have been many pleasant experiences and highlights.

"Maybe too many to list here.

"I must however mention that I played a part in bringing the great Juventus team to Club Marconi when Juventus toured Australia in the mid 80s.

"I also played a significant part in bringing many good players to this Club.

"Players of the calibre of Roberto Vieri, Brad Maloney, Angelo Costanzo," boasted a proud Labbozzetta.

And what gave Frank Labbozzetta the most pleasure whilst employed at Marconi?

"Here I would say that I've been generally able to have always signed up players that are wonderful boys with good characters and also to have been able to have attracted some very good coaches.

"Quality coaches such as Zoran Matic," ended Labbozzetta.

Frank Labbozzetta came into Soccer as far back as in 1969 and quickly became allied to Marconi.

By 1975, Frank became a Member of the Board at Marconi and in 1984 was elected as the Club's Vice President.

FAIRFIELD BULLS U12's SUPER CADETS

When you think of Soccer in Fairfield club like Marconi, Sydney United spring to mind. But a group of 12-year-olds at Fairfield Bulls want to change all that.

At the helm coach John Hatzimarkou has rebuild his team with players commitment and passion to our game, and all the players have come from a range of rival clubs.

It makes you realise how much talent this area produces when in a competition of 19 teams ranging from Central Coast to Wollongong.

Four teams are located within 1km of each other Fairfield Bulls Bonnyrigg White Eagles, Sydney United and Marconi Stallions. If you take the best from all these teams had to offer you would produce a champion team, says coach Mr John Hatzimarkou.

Now halfway through the competition of only two points outside a finals berth the Fairfield Bulls U12's are preparing for the business end of the season and 1-0 loss to Marconi in there last game with an own goal minutes from time has made them even more determined.

They are a great bunch of kids unpretentious and hard working and I've told my players that commitment to the game will pay dividends in the long run said coach John Hatzimarkou.

Good luck Fairfield Bulls U12's Super Cadets.

Back Row: (Coach) John Hatzimarkou, Johnny Repepi, Tino Cavassini, Hassan Taha, Matthew Brandalise, Fabrizio Mauu, Mark Abagi, Janan Kako. Front Row: Adam Clarke, Danyal Rapple, Steven Donoforio, Anthony Cannuli, Mark Maduri, Daniel Firth, Joseph Mammone. Absent: Damian Brosque, Ninev, Jacob, Javia Brosque (Manager).

National Youth League

GRAND FINAL

Marconi Stallions vs Melbourne Knights

Saturday, June 3rd • Marconi Stadium • Kick-off: 3pm

Southern Division Final

(Mobil Park)

Eastern Pride 0 Melbourne Knights 1 (Sulemani 53')

Northern Division Final

Marconi Stallions 4
Northern Spirit 2

By Mark Stavroulakis

The Marconi Stallions recorded a well-deserved 4-2 win over archrivals Northern Spirit, in last Saturday's Northern Youth League conference final.

Played at the Marconi Stadium in front of a healthy crowd of around five hundred, the game was explosive from the first whistle.

The young Northern Spirit squad started off 'like a house on fire', when defender Ross Kethel scored an unbelievable goal in the first minute, to give the visitors the lead. What looked like a cross by Kethel, turned into a swerving shot that took Marconi custodian Andrew Karabetsos by surprise.

Nevertheless, the pendulum swung Marconi's way in the 13th minute, when live wire' striker Eric Anabalon hit a well-timed shot from outside the eighteen-yard box that gave Spirit keeper and current Joey, Jacob Rex no chance.

Marconi restored their one-goal lead in the 37th minute, when Fijian international Josaia Sauturaga Junior jinxed passed a couple of players, and played a perfect ball straight onto an advancing Grant Last, who calmly slotted the ball away, giving the Stallions a two-one lead.

The never-say-die attitude of the youthful Spirit players prevailed in the 46th minute, when Ryan Griffiths unleashed a left foot thunderbolt inside the box, that gave Marconi Keeper Karabetsos no chance and boosted the confidence of the Spirit players before the break.

Sixty-one minutes into the second half, Marconi drew first blood with a well-taken goal by Kevo Gulessarian. It was the silky samba skills of Eric Anabalon, who turned goal scorer to creator, as he danced passed two Spirit players to provide a Beckham-like' cross to Gulessarian, who hit it sweetly first time, to give the Stallions a three-two lead.

Marconi sealed the game in the 72nd minute, when striker Anthony Mondello produced a fine shot just inside the 18-yard box, which gave the Stallions a four-two lead.

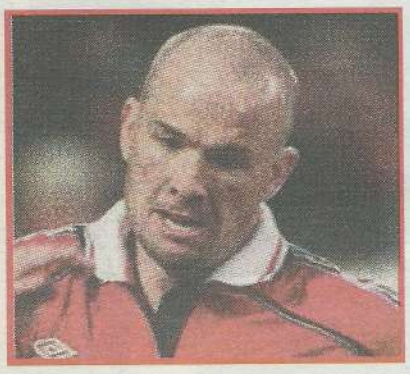
Towards the end of the match, tensions did heat up a little as Marconi captain Saso Trajcevski was red carded for an off the ball incident. Before this clash, young Saso was the best on the park, tackling and reading the ball excellently. Unfortunately it wasn't meant to be, as the young gun was given his marching orders in the 84th minute, which left the Stallions with ten men.

The Stallions hung on with a brilliant four-two win and secured a spot in next week's Grand-Final.

Victorious players of Marconi Stallions displaying the Northern Division NYL trophy after beating Northern Spirit.

Wollongong Wolves vs South Melbourne

Ronnie Corry - Coach



Matt Horsley - Captain

South Melbourne goal-keeper, Michael Petkovic (middle) celebrate with team-mate Mehmet Durakovic.

(Continued from Front Page)

"I have a full squad including Robbie Middleby back from serving his suspension.

"Of course we will be without Scotty Chipperfield, but that's fine, he's representing Australia over in Korea.

"I expect the ultimate winner will be the team that possesses on the day, the most hunger for the League Championship," Corry confirmed.

Corry will bring his team up to Sydney on Saturday and put them up in a hotel based near the Parramatta Stadium.

In the afternoon Corry will give his sturdy lads a light training session embracing some ball work.

Meanwhile South Melbourne equally are quietly confident.

In his very first season as Head coach at Souths, Mickey Petersen has pulled off miracles.

First he won the Minor League Championship, ('first past the post' and for me plus the rest of the planet, the REAL Championship), and now he has steered Souths into Sunday's Grand Final.

Surely 'Mickey P' and Wollongong's Ronnie Corry are the two absolutely unbackable favourites to take out this season's 'Coach Of The Year' award.

Straight after having edged out Sydney Olympic last Sunday to have Souths climb into this Sunday's Grand Final, the always smiling, and naturally humble Petersen, commented: "We bought ourselves a ticket to the Grand Final.

"The maturity of the team showed in the manner they put the team first before the individual."

Last night from Melbourne, a relaxed Petersen went on to add to ABSW: " The only problem we do have is with Stevie Panopoulos who right now is a 50-50 chance of playing on Sunday. Steve has a problem with his hammy, (hamstring), but we don't think it is torn, but he must remain a doubtful starter.

"I was relieved when we scored that second goal last Sunday against Olympic and we are all very happy to have made it into the Grand Final.

"Playing against Ron Corry is a pleasure as I very much like the way he handles his team and the way he has them playing the game. I must be honest and say that I really look up to Ron Corry.

"We have a good relationship with Corry and always look forward to playing his side.

"As for Sunday's big match, let the game be the winner as it will be a real tight one I firmly believe," commented Mickey 'P'.

"I also believe that Corry should have been given the WIN Stadium for Sunday's venue as his team qualified first for the Grand Final," the consistently honest Melbourne coach remarked.

Petersen did quietly hint that Souths will be lining up a little differently to the way it did last Sunday against Olympic.

Seems that Souths' mercurial little skipper, Paul Trimboli, (arguably Australia's best domestic-based player over the past 10 years), is used sparingly these days by his former team-mate and current coach, Mickey Petersen.

Rarely this season has 'Trimmers' finished a whole match.

However last Sunday at Olympic Park in the Preliminary Final against Sydney Olympic, Petersen surprisingly left 'Trimmers' out of his starting XI and only brought him on at halftime in place of midfielder Steve Panopoulos.

Understandably feeling disappointed at being left out as a Souths starter, Trimboli remained professionally calm and collected and was still fully focused when late in the match he rattled Olympic's horizontal with a snap-drive.

South Melbourne has quickly arranged Supporters' Travel packages for the Grand Final costing $495:00.

The package includes a return flight ticket to Sydney, bus transfer to and from airport, one night's accommodation at the Pacific International Hotel plus a seat at the Grand Final breakfast.

– John Economos

Mickey Petersen - Coach

South Melbourne's captain Paul Trimboli, carrying his injured midfielder, Stevie Panapoulos in jubilation at full time last Sunday seconds after their team had defeated Sydney Olympic 2-0 at Olympic Park.

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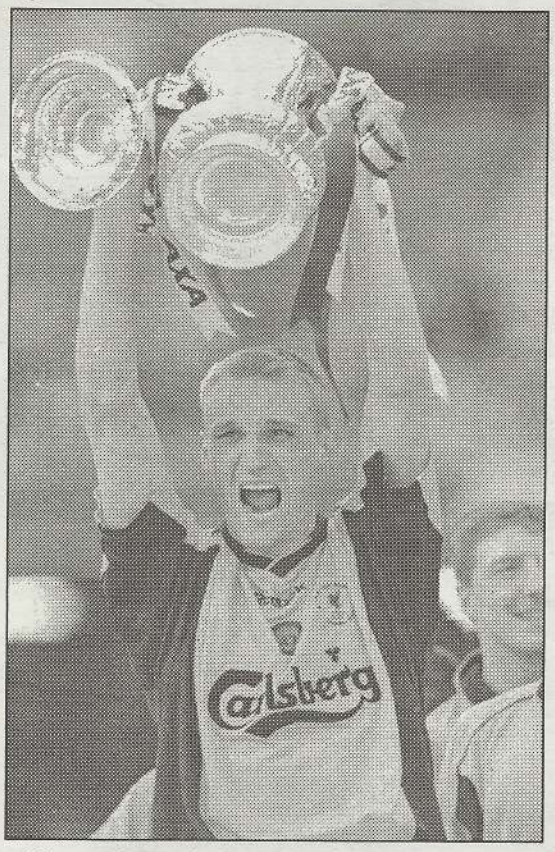
Liverpool NSW 2170

MALAYSIA-BOUND SYDNEY OLYMPIC U20's

Back Row (L to R): P. Moustakas, G. Pizanis, M. Cawley, (Captain) A. Durante, L. Panecassio, G. Moss, P. Bivano, S. Biviano, A. Sarmonikas, S. Tirovski.
Seated (L to R): N. Vaganas, L. Haliti, D. Nicolou, C. Bouzani's (Team Manager), Michael M. Urukalo (Coach), G. Zorbas (Physiotherapist), Z. Caravella, P. Skanavis, S. Bandouvakis. Missing: (inset) Lee Miot, 1st Grade Player.

Letters to the Editor



Liverpool captain, Sami Hyypia with the English FA Cup.

Lucky Liverpool

Dear Sir,

I watched the FA Cup and also the UEFA Cup finals. Two good games but the old saying was Lucky Arsenal. The new saying should be Lucky Liverpool as an ex-player and referee I must say Liverpool were lucky. Arsenal should have had a penalty and Alaves just lost by an own goal. As Jimmy Greaves always said Football is a funny old game.

D. Gardner,
Hampton Park. VIC.

Knights, violence & ethnic clubs

Dear Sir,

The lynch mob are in full cry, with David Hill, plus a host of other 'instant' experts calling for the expulsion of Melbourne Knights from the NSL.

As wise heads know, Oz Soccer problems are very complex, especially the ethnic issue.

If only the simplistic solutions proposed by people, (some well-meaning), would work in practise.

Ideally the NSL should be made up of clubs based on the Perth Glory model, coast to coast is easier said than done.

Critics of the well known shortcomings of ethnic Soccer clubs such as the Melbourne Knights, conveniently overlook the invaluable contribution such clubs have made to the advancement of Oz Soccer.

I am not an apologist for the Melbourne Knights, or any other ethnic Soccer club.

I fully understand the deficiencies that ultimately destroy most ethnic Soccer clubs, but this campaign to eliminate the ethnic clubs from the NSL is a futile form of social engineering.

Those ethnic clubs that are financially sound, should be allowed to stay in the NSL indeferately.

If by some miracle the Perth Glory model can be implanted into Adelaide, Melbourne and elsewhere, then clubs such as Melbourne Knights, Sydney Utd, Adelaide City etc, will quickly fall by the wayside.

Until that happens, ethnic Soccer clubs will remain a force in the NSL because there is no attentive. It's the old story of 'don't throw the baby out with the dirty bath water.'

Unless of course you want more Carlton's, Collingwood's, Eastern Pride's disasters.

R. Melor,
Bondi, NSW.

Stange won't be forgotten

Dear Sir,

So there is to be no more Bernd Stange at Perth Glory. The question is how great will the loss be?

To the non-soccer savvy commercial television stations, this news will no doubt be devastating. To them, Bernd Stange was manna from heaven.

If Bernd was employed to raise the profile of Perth Glory off the pitch then his tenure was a huge success. Never will we see his like again.

A coach who is such a public relations dream, who puts himself so far at the forefront of his team. For a while Bernd Stange was Perth Glory.

If his coaching days on the soccer field are over, the genial German could move to Parliament House and coach politicians on pressing the flesh with the public, and winning over the man on the street.

Both before and after vital games, come rain or shine a smiling Bernd always had time to wave to the crowd and shake a few hands.

Something that you would never see Sir Alec Ferguson, Brian Clough, Bill Shankly or Matt Busby do.

As a coach though, was he a success? This is questionable. He took the team to the finals on three occasions which is commendable, but we must not forget that inaugural coach Gary Marocchi took his team of part timers to the brink of finals football, missing out in the final game thanks to the Melbourne Knights in his second season.

A remarkable effort all things considered. Bernd inherited a full time playing staff, and players that his predecessor could only have dreamed about. Class players have come and gone.

A minor Premiership was won but the lucrative Grand Final win still alluded him.

Because of this, there will always be a question mark over the Stange era.

A coach lives or dies by his team. He must share their highs and suffer their defeats. Bernd was only too willing to take the applause but never the criticism. When the team lost he would deflect any criticism with simple comments such as "we have let our fans down."

Fingers would be pointed at the indiscipline of his players, off field feuds, but never would he accept responsibility for his tactical or selection failings on match day.

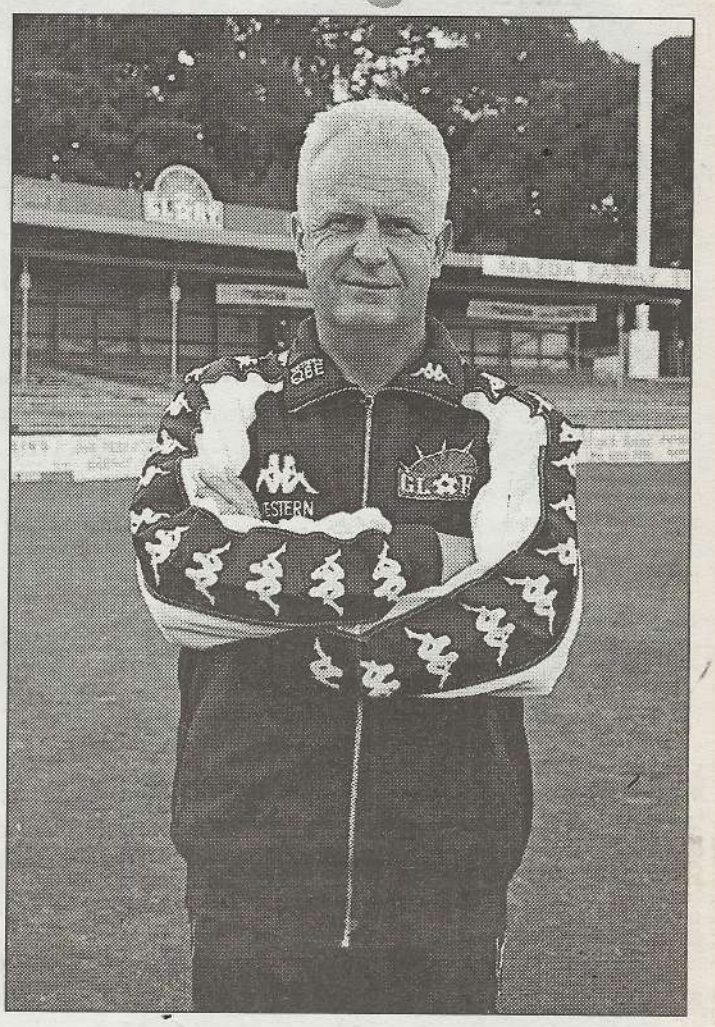
Venables has been berated by the Australian Soccer media for letting a two goal lead slip against Iran, but Bernd managed to let a three goal lead vanish and hardly a whisper has been heard. He is still lauded as a hero, again a reflection of his brilliant public relations.

A coach is at the end of the day judged on his performance and on the amount that he wins. However, more importantly than that to those close to the game a coach is also judged on the tactical changes that he makes that can turn a game to his advantage. Looking at his last two games at Subiaco when strong leadership and decision making were required, he fell.

There may be no more Bernd Stange, but the club has a strong foundation of support on which to build. They have a strong nucleus of players with an even stronger resolve for next season.

All they need is a coach with an eye only for that golden goal.

Ashley Morrison
Perth Radio 6PR,
WA



Bernd Stange: End of an era at Perth Glory.

A BETTER WORLD CUP DEAL FOR OCEANIA

Dear Sir,

Recently I wrote a letter to FIFA head-quarters in Zurich suggesting a better deal for qualifying for the World Cup by the Oceania group winner in future to help the code progress in this region.

As everyone knows this sudden death knockout format is extremely unfair as Mark Viduka recently-mentioned in the media.

So what is the answer? Well there are a couple of options which will be difficult to persuade FIFA to agree upon, as both options have there drawbacks with other confederations.

The first option is a direct route to the World Cup finals from Oceania, but that would mean one less position somewhere else. Also it doesn't benefit us here in Australia in any great way, as the finals are held on other continents, with local public treated only to Mickey Mouse contests in the qualifying rounds.

The other option which in my mind is a better one, is to be included into a European Group, once the Oceania Qualifiers are over.

With some 50 odd countries spread out over 9 groups one extra country is not going to make any difference. Where the problem will come from is Euro countries will object to travelling to Australia or NZ, for their away games, when Australia in particular won't have that problem if all our best players work over there.

However, some sort of compromise has to be worked out for the benefit of the region as a whole. If Asia and Africa do not want us in the regional groups, because we are too big and strong due to our European heritage, then joining Europe or CONCACAF is the only answer.

South America is out of the question unless it was split into two-groups of qualifiers. Crossing over the Pacific 9 or 10 times by the Oceania winner to play every South American country over there is to much too ask for.

So there you have it, either a direct route (which is okay), or the preferable one joining into a group of 5 or 6 countries playing for points, with a guaranteed 5 or 6 big time qualifying matches on home soil in every capital city, from either Europe or the North and Central American zone.

Anyone of those three scenarios is better than this Russian Roulette we have to face every four years. So can Basil Scarsella please push hard on this issue, otherwise Oceania will remain a rugby stronghold.

Dominic Scullino,
Nerang, Qld.

This is unfair to Soccer fans

Dear Sir,

Last week, Soccer Australia committed one of its oft-frequent *faux pas* by announcing that the Grand Final for this year's NSL season, would be played at the Parramatta Stadium.

To make matters worse, it even went ahead to suggest that it was considering kicking-off the game at noon! This, according to its warped logic, was aimed at accommodating the almighty C7 and its AFL viewers. I think all these is totally unfair and mean to all the long-suffering fans of soccer in this country.

If I may ask SA, does the almighty C7 put soccer fans into consideration when airing its obviously more-lucrative AFL games? Also, SA should not attempt to pull wool over anyone's eyes by arguing that the whole arrangement is aimed at lifting tne profile of the sport.

Can SA please give some thought to the well-being of soccer fans in this country? It is not enough that SA went into a hair-brain contract with C7 to televise highlights of NSL games at mid-night throughout the season. Now do we again have to stomach another second-class treatment from SA — all in its warped attempt to satisfy C7?

How about taking the long-maligned soccer fans into some consideration for once? Playing the Grand Final at noon is not going to win over AFL fans as the SA in its curious wisdom, thinks is possible? AFL fans definitely will not be inclined to dump their sport and embrace another code whose season is about to draw to a close.

If SA could not win over AFL fans when the NSL was in full swing, how on earth it hopes to pull off such a miraculous feat now, really beats me.

How about pandering to the interest of the real soccer-loving fans for once, who have paid hard-earned money all season-long to watch games? It is the least that SA can do to reward soccer followers by giving them a Grand Final worthy of all expectations.

SA should please wake up to its responsibilities.

Faye Burchill,
Kanigan, QLD.

OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

OCEANIA CHIEF BACKS WOLVES

Oceania Confederation chairman Basil Scarsella beat FIFA to the punch in being the first to advocate that Wollongong Wolves and other clubs which had qualified for the World Club championship be granted compensation following the "postponement" of the tournament.

During an interview on Adelaide Radio 5RPH on Tuesday, Scarsella, the former Soccer Australia chairman, pulled no punches in championing the cause of the Oceania representative.

"It's (the postponement) is disappointing when it's so close to the start of the event. But, FIFA have their reasons and they put those out in specifying three major reasons.

"Number one, was the poor economic climate in some of the countries which were to participate — I'm not sure how valid some of that is — the second reason is congested fixtures, but again, everybody has known it was going to be a busy 2001, and I think, the third and most valid reason for postponing is the problems that FIFA are having with ISL, their marketing arm which is in liquidation.

"Clearly, it has an impact on all the clubs, especially Wollongong, so we will see what we can do to sort something out for them.

"I'm not sure that there is any possibility of giving them a $4.5 million dollar bonus without playing, but obviously we need to at least look at reimbursing their expenses.

"When the Oceania club championship was played up at Port Moresby, Oceania paid the expenses for the other 10 clubs that participated, but not Wollongong, simply because they won and were going to be part of a bigger prize.

"If that's not going to be the case (this time) then clearly Oceania will need to consider the possibility of reimbursing Wollongong for their expenses.

"Obviously, that would be some consolation, but it would be a long way short of the $4.5 million dollars."

Scarsella said he was surprised that the World Club Championship had been singled out for postponement, regarding the Confederations Cup as the competition that would have been more likely under threat.

"In fact, had you asked me last week which competition had a question mark for the future, I would have said the Confederations Cup.

"Certainly, the Confederations Cup will go ahead this year in Korea and Japan, but after that I would have had my doubts whether that would have continued, whereas the World Club Championship last year in Brazil when South Melbourne participated, was seen as one of the more successful FIFA tournaments, obviously after the traditional World Cup.

"In fact, there was talk of increasing the participants from 12 to 16, which would then make the World Club Championship a real major tournament.

"Feedback I've had from FIFA is that the competition (WCC) is the tournament they planned to build on.

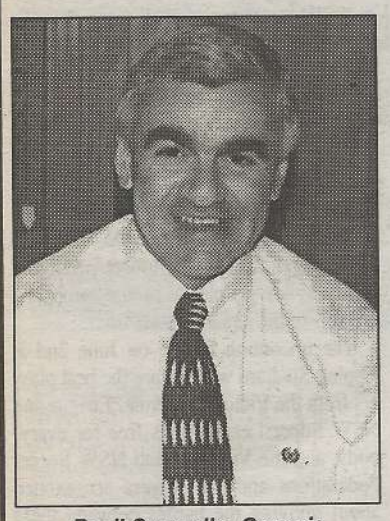
"There's always going to be clubs in Europe who complain about a congestion of fixtures, but FIFA is looking at building a new tournament and (WCC) was that tournament.

"There are in fact, 11 countries that have expressed interest in hosting the (WCC) in 2003 and I think, eight or nine countries, including Australia, that have expressed interest, for 2005."

Scarsella said that Oceania was keen to help Wollongong out of their difficult financial situation, caused by FIFA's decision to postpone this year's tournament.

He said a meeting would be held as soon as possible to examine the Oceania angle of the predicament and to push for a reimbursement of expenses so far incurred by Wollongong in preparation for the series.

"We really need to wait to see how FIFA deals with the other countries and we would expect that Oceania is treated in the same manner."



Basil Scarsella: Oceania Confederation boss.

BBC BLAST

According to BBC broadcaster Mayhair Bowds, the FIFA World Club Championship has not been postponed or cancelled, but will be scrapped forever.

"I think the future of this competition is extremely bleak," Bowds said.

"European football has made it very, very clear that it wants nothing to do with this competition.

"Manchester United effectively used it as a sort of mid-winter break, something they don't have in England.

"Really, UEFA are totally opposed to it and they are now in a dominant position in respect to Blatter.

"I think we have seen the last of the World Club Championship."

MATIC STAYS PUT

Zoran Matic has quashed speculation he would return to Marconi Stallions, the club he guided to the NSL preliminary final in 1998.

"I have a job at Adelaide City. I will not be going anywhere," said Matic, who is reportedly set to sign a State League player from interstate.

He also has short-listed two players with previous NSL experience.

VAUNTED VIDDIE

Adelaide City captain and Socceroo midfielder Aurelio Vidmar has scooped the prize pool in Adelaide.

Vidmar needed help to carry home his major media and club awards, booty gathered from his outstanding 2000-2001 NSL season.

The Advertiser sports editor Andrew Holman and Fort Knox Security director Jim Wills presented Vidmar with the paper's Golden Boots and Fort Knox Security prizes, totally at $2000 after being chosen as the best SA player in the NSL.

The affable Vidmar also was acclaimed the $2000 Adelaide Pest Control Player of The Year and the Players' Player of The Year.

He also picked up the Bridgestone prize of a set of golf clubs, while fellow midfielder Brad Hassell took out the Best Team Man award.

CUP CLASHES

West End Federation Cup holder Croydon Kings successfully defended their trophy by downing Metro Stars 3-1 in a quarter-final on Adelaide's Cup Day holiday.

Reigning league champions Blue Eagles toppled State League side Salisbury Apaches 5-1, while Playford Patriots flew the Premier League flag high by eliminating Amateur League representative Fulham United 2-0.

State League frontrunner Birkalla reinforced its claim to promotion favouritism by beating Premier League's White City Warriors 3-0 as a Jimmy Tsekinis hat-trick carried it to a semi-final berth.

Zoric Matic: Staying put at the Force.

The semis will be played on Monday, June 11, the Queens Birthday Holiday.

WEST END CUP RESULTS

Quarter-finals

Salisbury Apaches 1 (Deeley) **Blue Eagles 5** (Brooks 3, Sergi, Artone)

Playford Patriots 2 (Dimella, Pearce) **Fulham United 0**

Metro Stars 1 (Day) **Croydon Kings 3** (Vidmar, Pirone, Piotrowsk)

White City Warriors 0 Birkalla 3 (Tsekinis 3)

Allan Crisp can be heard on the Marshall Thompson Homes/Pacific Real Estate 5RPH (1197AM) Breakfast Show each Tuesday from 7am-8.30am, along with Croydon Kings coach Phil Scardigno, Peter Millar and The Advertiser soccer writer Meno Toutsidis and producer Rob Popplestone.

Millar and Crisp return on Sundays from 8.30am-9.30am, in company with Playford Patriots midfielder Mark Brazzale and guests for the 5RPH (SOS) Soccer On Sunday Program.

South Australia Premier League Results

ROUND 9

PREMIER LEAGUE

Modbury Jets (Hassell)	2	Croydon Kings	0
Blue Eagles (Brooks 2, Artone)	3	Port Pirie Spirit (S. Porter)	1
Port Lion Pirates (Misailidis)	1	Playford Patriots (Pearce)	1
Metro Stars (Fleetwood)	1	Raiders (Zilic, Saric)	2
White City Warriors (S. Stam, S. Mitchell)	2	Campbelltown (J. Barbaro, Daniel Menechella)	2
Adelaide City (D. Filewood)	1	Olympic FC (Salapasidis)	1

STATE LEAGUE

Seaford Surfers (Coad)	1	Western Strikers (Perrotta)	1
Birkalla (Hagias 2, Mihalopoulos, Tsekinis, McGregor, Westervelt)	6	Enfield Falcons	0
Cobras	0	Para Hills Knights (Waine)	1
Salisbury Apaches (Beck, Robson, Deeley, Elliott)	4	Panthers (Kwas)	1
Northern Demons	2	Cumberland Foxes	3
Seaford Surfers (Salvemeni, Kolovinos)	0	Hills Hawks (Fowler 2, Coombs)	3
Western Strikers	0	Noarlunga Bulldogs (Kay 2, Gomez) (Still, Chesterman)	2

ROUND 10

PREMIER LEAGUE

SATURDAY, JUNE 2

Campbelltown Red Devils v Adelaide City
Raiders v White City Woodville
Croydon Kings v Metro Stars
Playford Patriots v Modbury Jets
Port Pirie Patriots v Port Lion Pirates
Olympic FC v Blue Eagles

STATE LEAGUE

SATURDAY, JUNE 2

Hills Hawks v Western Strikers
Cumberland Foxes v Seaford Surfers
Panthers v Northern Demons
Para Hills Knights v Salisbury Apaches
Enfield Falcons v Cobras
Noarlunga Bulldogs v Birkalla

1280 kids sign-up for Soccer Expo

Interest in next month's Telstra International Soccer Expo has reached record proportions with over 1280 children registering to play in the Telstra All Schools Cup — a staggering increase of over 300 per cent.

The Telstra All Schools Cup will be played on all three days of the Telstra International Soccer Expo at Fox Studios June 15-17.

The Telstra International Soccer Expo is the signature event for the soccer industry in Australia and will feature display stands by the National Soccer League clubs, Leeds United plus an array of leading international soccer equipment suppliers.

The Telstra International Soccer Expo will also feature an appearance by the LG Socceroos on Saturday, June 16, plus a Celebrity match involving Olympians Matthew Dunn, Duncan Armstrong and Jane Flemming plus other stars on Sunday, June 17.

A total of 128 school teams have entered the Telstra All Schools Cup including 45 girls teams. The Telstra All Schools Cup will involve primary and secondary boys and Girls teams playing in separate six-a-side competitions.

Telstra International Soccer Expo event organiser, Carolyn Ledowsky, said the schools response has been astonishing.

"We've never had this level of response during the first two years of the Expo. The previous highest number of participating players was around 400 children so we've had an increase of over 300 per cent," said Ms Ledowsky.

Ms Ledowsky said the interest from schoolgirls was especially pleasing.

"The interest from secondary schoolgirls almost matches the boys. We've got girls teams not only from throughout the metropolitan and outer metropolitan areas but also from as far as Narromine, Cessnock and Milton," Ms Ledowsky added.

TIME TO ACT ON DECLINE

Bert van Bedaf

It will take Victorian soccer a long time to recover from the wreckage left behind this NSL season.

There is the collapse of Carlton last December, the demise of Eastern Pride a couple of months ago and the May 6 riot at Somers St, immediately after the first-leg elimination final against Perth Glory, for which home-side Melbourne Knights was heavily fined.

Melbourne Knights were fined $30,000 for bringing the game into disrepute. A $50,000 good behavior bond has been imposed on them for a year. Next season's home match against Perth Glory, some of whose players and coach were attacked in the fracas, must be played outside Melbourne and no NSL matches may be played at Somers St until the home stadium has been upgraded to improve safety for players and officials.

The Perth player at the centre of the tumult, Bobby Despotovski, has been fined $2000 and was given a six-match suspended sentence to remain in force until June 30 next year.

A three-fingered salute by Despotovski, of Serbian decent, is said to have angered a group of hooligan-style Knights supporters, who are mainly of Croatian decent, in the assault on Bernd Stange and players, including Despotovski.

NSL general manager Stefan Kamasz made the point that "the player (Despotovski) was not charged with inciting crowd violence." But he added the gesture was "deemed to be offensive to people of Croatian decent and of the Muslim faith".

In the end it wasn't simply an offensive salute, but also a bunch of thugs bent on creating havoc. The gang was again at work in Sydney in the Knights minor semi-final against Sydney Olympic last week. Police resorted to using capsicum spray.

Across town, at South Melbourne during the major semi-final against Wollongong, the atmosphere was without incident. But the ethnic question did get an airing.

South Melbourne president George Vasilopoulos's announcement of a partnership with Greek top club Olympiakos came on the heels of an announcement a couple of months ago that the Bank of Cyprus had become the major sponsor of South Melbourne, which is largely supported by Melbourne's Greek community.

Vasilopoulos rejected any notion that the two initiatives moved the club away from the Australian mainstream.

"We approached a lot of clubs in Europe and especially in England. But those clubs may see fit to align themselves with somebody else. Whether we're seen as a mainstream club or a Greek club doesn't matter. Our constitution says to be a successful club on the park. If we win a championship every two or three years and you want to call us a Greek club or a Turkish club, I don't care, as long as we are Australian champions. If we forget about our origins and the Greek community, we won't exist next year," Vasilopoulos said.

"If we forget about our origins and the Greek community, we won't exist next year. Who's going to come in and give me a couple of million dollars?

I'm still waiting from Holden and Ford and all the other multinationals. We approached 55 of them and so far they haven't come forward. So, we'll do everything here to survive. If that is what it takes (to rely on the club's Greek roots) to survive and to be successful and win championships, we'll do it," he said.

It's a pertinent observation. Who's going to invest into NSL soccer clubs other than loyal supporters and business donors who share the ethnic heritage of the particular club? If no nobody else comes across, it is left to the core soccer communities to keeping the sport alive at a local level and nurture the talent that represents Australia at international levels (youth, Olympic and senior).

Nevertheless, the malaise in Melbourne is palpable The collapse of two NSL clubs and the Knights rampage have made corporate Australia think twice about putting spsonsorship money into a local soccer club.

"It doesn't bode well for the way things are operating at the moment. It is difficult to send a positive message out about the local game. It's very frustrating," said South Melbourne general manager Damien Phillips when Carlton and Pride fell over.

To flourish clubs need cash-flow from gates, catering, merchandising,sponsorship, from licensed venues and television rights, which is either not forthcoming for the majority of clubs or not available at all (televisions rights money).

"We've got to have a game that is thriving and surviving strongly," Phillips said.

"The game is limping from one problem to another. The game as a whole needs to work together. It starts at the top and works all the way to the bottom. It's Soccer Australia, it's the clubs, the state federations, every person that has a vested interest in the game. The PFA, the player managers, they all have something to do with the game," he said.

A former Australian Rules footballer and football administrator, Phillips advocated an independent inquiry into soccer to obtain an outside perspective and recommendations.

"Maybe something not unlike what the AFL did 15 years ago is needed, when it had a report provided independent of anyone involved in the game to provide recommendations," Phillips said.

"The Soccer 21 document (Soccer Australia's own reform program) was provided by people who were internally involved in the game. We've got to go external. We've got to get people who make hard and harsh recommendations and everybody's got to agree that you have to work towards whatever those recommendations are. That's the only way," Phillips said.

South Melbourne's right wingback, Goran Lozanovski (right) tossles with Sydney Olympic's playmaker, Troy Halpin.

North v South: The rivalry continues

The revival of state soccer clashes will help to lift the profile of the sport and renew the kind of rivalry people have come to associate with the state of origin encounters in rugby, Australian Rules football and cricket.

The last time a senior Victorian team played was when South Australia travelled to the then home ground of Box Hill in 1995. The result was 4 - 2 to Victoria.

The last time Victoria and NSW did battle was way back in 1980, when the Vics pummeled NSW 4 - 0. Here's to hoping that sort of scoreline will happen again!

There have been 35 Victoria Vs NSW games since the first game way back in 1883. That game was a draw, but there have been varying results, big crowds and small crowds, and plenty of big names taking part in senior representative soccer since then.

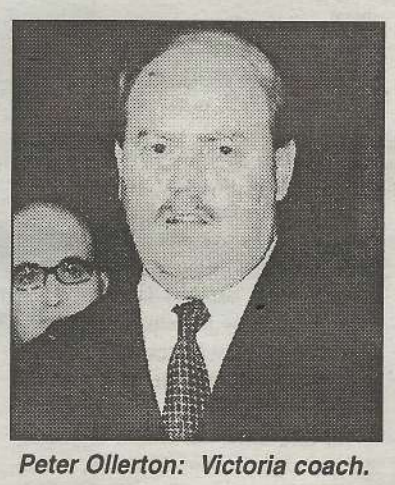
The first game was held at the East Melbourne Cricket Ground on August 16, and ended up a 2 - 2 draw. There was a crowd of 200 people, as there was at the second game at the South Melbourne Cricket Ground two days later. That game resulted in a 0 - 0 draw.

The 1960's was a boom time for NSW Vs Victoria clashes. It was at a time when all the stars of the game at National level were taking part, and interstate soccer was seen as the real equivalent to a National League.

Crowds were between 13,000 and 15,000, and the fixtures were a highlight of the soccer season.

The game of 1969, for example, reads like a who's who of Australia soccer at the time:

NSW: Ron Corry, Manfred Schaefer, David Zeman, Stan Ackerley, Dennis Yaager, John Warren, Atti Abonyi (W. Rutherford 721), Archie Blue, Adrian Alston, Ray Baartz, Mike Denton (-. Campbell 871). Coach: Joe Venglos.



Peter Ollerton: Victoria coach.

VICTORIA: Lou Kastner, Milan Mihailjovic (David Kelly 641), Billy Cook, John Bedford, Frank Micic, Jim Mackay (Horst Rau 461), Billy Vojtek, Jim Rooney, Nick McCallum, Tommy McColl, Branko Buljevic.

The most recent game between the two states was held too long ago way back in 1980. It ended as a 4 - 0 drubbing of NSW by Victoria at Olympic Park. There was 2,500 people in attendance, and the teams lined up as follows:

Victoria 4 (Paton 311 471 Cole 351 Campbell 691) New South Wales 0 Olympic Park, Melbourne. March 2, 1980. Att: 2,500.

Referee: Stewart Mellings. Caution: Cole (vic).

VICTORIA: Peter Laumets, John Yzendoorn, Steve Kokoska, John Gardiner, Jim Tansey, Jim Campbell, Joe Tront, Jamie Paton (Noel Mitten 831), Gary Cole, Tommy Cumming.

Coach: Len McKendry.

NSW: Peter Wilson, Branko Thompson, Peter Mullen, Steve McDonald, Bill Palmer, Bruno Cagalj (Craig Hall 461), Neil Williams, Mark Davis (Joe Farrugia 461), Clive Eaton, Andy Scott, Dennis Daley. Coach: Leo Baumgartner.

The last time a senior Victorian team played was in 1995 when the Vics beat South Australia 4 - 2. Robert Brian and Henry Velkovski played in that game, and are still in the squad 5 years on.

The upcoming fixture on June 2nd at Epping Stadium will feature the best players from the Victorian Premier League and NSW Super League. It is free for everybody, and the Victorian and NSW Soccer Federations and the players are excited about reviving the battles between these two great soccer states.

Victorian team Selection The first senior soccer team selected to represent Victoria in six years has been announced. The team will play against New South Wales at Epping Stadium on Saturday June 2, with free entry for everybody.

The team has been selected by Peter Ollerton (Coach), Ian Greener (Assistant coach) and Vasko Stojcevski (Manager) after considering recommendations made by Premier League coaches.

There have been 16 players named in the squad, with four players named as reserve / standby players to be called up in case of injury or withdrawal.

The squad is as follows:

Peter Groidis .....Altona East Pheonix
Ross Antoniadis ....Altona East Pheonix
Thomas Karapatsos ....Bentleigh Greens
Jimmy Latinopoulos .....Bulleen Zebras
Mile Medjedovic .....Heidelberg United
Stiven Nedanovski .....Preston Lions
Brian MacNicol .....Bulleen Zebras
Henry Velkovski ...Green Gully Cavaliers
Damian Vojtek .....Heidelberg United
Mijo Trupkovic .....St Albans Saints
Juan Nilo .....Bentleigh Greens
Danny Gnjidic .....Bulleen Zebras
Alfonso Opazo .....Heidelberg United
Nick Tsaltas .....Port Melbourne Sharks
Robert Brian .....Green Gully Cavaliers
Jim Kourtis .....Heidelberg United
Darren McGrath .....Altona Magic
Zoran Todorovski .....Altona Magic
Idriz Pelja .....Essendon Royals
Steve Martin .....Green Gully Cavaliers

VSF calling All Ex-players

The Victorian Soccer Federation is calling back all players from senior Victorian soccer teams of days gone by to gather together again as VIPs at the upcoming Victoria Vs NSW game.

The Victorian and New South Wales Soccer Federations are looking to rebuild the tradition and honour of interstate soccer, and believe that getting previous state representatives together to enjoy the occasion is important in recreating that special spirit for current and future representatives.

Therefore, the VSF is calling for all ex-senior Victorian players from any era to contact the VSF at their earliest convenience.

Please call Neil Wallace of the Victorian Soccer Federation on (03) 9682 8713 or 0409 881 119, or email nwallace@soccervictoria.org.au to arrange collection of a VIP pass for the Victoria Vs NSW game on June 2nd at Epping Stadium.

NSL ELIMINATION SERIES

SOUUTH MELBOURNE	2
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	0

By Bert Van Bedaf

Minor premier South Melbourne rebounded from two finals losses to book a rematch with titleholder Wollongong Wolves in Sydney this Sunday, after shaking off Sydney Olympic 2-0 in the preliminary final at Olympic Park last Sunday.

South coach Mike Petersen stunned everyone by leaving captain Paul Trimboli on the bench. He brought Trimboli on for the second half in place of Steve Panopoulos.

This is the final Sydney didn't want (preferring an Olympic versus Wolves bout) and the one Wollongong didn't want in Sydney (but at its WIN stadium). But Soccer Australia has decreed Parramatta stadium will host the two outsiders who have proved to be the best two sides in the NSL competition this season, but won't attract another 40,000-plus crowd.

South didn't exactly run rings around a gutsy Olympic. The goals came from Olympic mistakes. But the home team did show more fight and flair than in its past two outings and in the end it deserved victory and its place in the grand final.

South coach Mike Petersen conceded, "There wasn't much in it", apart from the two goals. "Having won the minor premiership and having messed up a couple of times, from our perspective, we bought ourselves a ticket to the grand final. It wasn't the prettiest of games, but finals football isn't about that," he said.

Olympic coach Branko Culina, simply said, "We lost. I thought we played good football. The game was there for the taking. We're bitterly disappointed, because we had a fair chance today."

A costly mistake by the Olympic defence gave South the lead in the 27th minute.

Olympic keeper Clint Bolton cleared to Scott Baillie, who found himself under pressure on the left near the box. His poorly executed square ball fell to Con Boutsianis, who immediately sent a long lob goal-bound.

Olympic captain Ante Juric got a hand to it and Bolton lunged desperately to clear off the line, but despite or perhaps because of Juric's touch, the leather flew in the net. Referee Brett Hugo awarded the goal, whilst giving Juric a yellow card for handling the ball.

"The ball came across my face and I put my hand up. In hindsight I should not have touched it," said Juric, who would have missed the grand final in any case having accumulated two yellow cards.

South, who were pushed into defence in the first 20 minutes gained inspiration from the opportunistic strike and moved more into attack.

Taking advantage of a stray Juric pass, Andy Vlahos sprinted into space. He got the ball past the struggling Baillie, but his low shot went well wide of the far post.

Olympic's confidence, so apparent in the opening phase, took a battering after the goal but they regained some of their zest in stoppage time, earning two corners. But South kept the initiative, going into the break a goal up.

Petersen's decision to bring on Trimboli after the break added to South's creative flair. But it was first Boutsianis who brought danger into the Olympic defence in the 50th minute. His cross from the left gave Vlahos a chance, but Bolton parried the close-range shot with his body to deny a surging South.

Olympic got away a third time, five minutes later, when Trimboli fed Zeljko Susa, who hit the crossbar with a left foot shot that was well beyond the reach of Bolton.

The visitors came close to an equaliser in the 57th minute. A Kresimir Marusic cross floated into the box, where former South man George Goutzioulis rose to head for goal. But South ëkeeper Michael Petkovic palmed his header for a corner.

South signalled its rising dominance on the hour and only Bolton stood between the minor premier extending its lead. Bolton first parried a Kalogeracos header from a Vlahos cross. Boutsianis crossed the ball back into the box from the right to Vlahos whose shot Bolton also parried before it was cleared.

But Bolton only delayed the inevitable. Three minutes later, Kalogeracos sent the ball into the box, where Susa drove it against the post. He chested the rebound and blasted it past Bolton for South's second and decisive goal.

Trimboli could have added a third goal but he hit the crossbar in the 84th minute.

Substitute Dylan MacAllister found the net in the 88th minute, from an Andrew Packer cross, but he was judged offside, and in any event, Olympic's courageous, last gasp attacks came too late to save the Sydneysiders, whose season finished in Melbourne.

"The turning point came when we gave the ball away (that led to the first goal)," Culina said.

"We were all over them for the first 20 minutes and it would have been interesting hadn't we given the (opening) goal away," he said.

Culina blamed both Bolton and Baillie for the blunder. "Both are senior players.

But that's football for you," he said.

He said the second goal came about, beeause Olympic needed to push forward.

"When we were a goal down, we took a few risks. We had to take chances and we got punished for it," Culina said, adding, "But credit to South. They've been a good side all season."

Petersen defended his decision to leave Trimboli out of the starting eleven.

"We established early on (in the season) that we have a strong squad. It is a collection of energies. There would have been some personal disappointment. But Paul (Trimboli) is strong enough to put the team before the individual."

Trimboli, who was sitting next to Petersen, said, "I didn't know about it until we got to the ground. Initially, there was disappointment. It made sure I stayed with the boys and mentally with the game. As it turned out, I had to play a part."

About the game, Trimboli said. "We stuffed up the last two weeks and we were on the backfoot for a lot of the time in the first half. But we have an amazing group of guys and we game through to have another crack at Wollongong."

About the possible line-up on Sunday, Petersen said he had not considered it - or whether Trimboli would get a first-up start.

Asked, who would win, Culina, obviously disappointed his side wasn't in the grand final, said, "I couldn't give a damn, but I'll watch it anyway."

Con Boutsianis (left) of South Melbourne, attempts to keep Troy Halpin of Sydney Olympic from the ball, during the semi final match between South Melbourne and Sydney Olympic played at Olympic Park, Melbourne.

South Melbourne's prolific striker, Vaughan Coveny (right) in an aerial battle with a Sydney Olympic defender.

Troy Halpin (left) of Sydney Olympic is challenged by Goran Lozanovski of South Melbourne, during the semi final match between South Melbourne and Sydney Olympic.

ABSW 'Player Of The Year'

HOW THEY FARED

Reid Paul	27
Costanzo Angelo	25
RechFernando	23
Mori Damian.	22
Susa Zeljko	20
Thompson Archie	18
Chipperfield Scott	17
Trimboli Paul	17
Vlahos Andy	17
Miller Scott.	16
Boutsianis Con	16
Wilson Lindsay.	16
Petrovski Sasho	15
Elrich Ahmad	15
Pondeljak Tom	15
Lapskansky Ljubo	14
Harnwell Jamie	13
Castro Alex	13
Vidmar Aurelio	13
Porter Joel.	12
Vargas Andy	12
Horsley Matthew	12
Baillie Scott	11
Despotovski Bobby	11
Dodd Travis	11
Ibrahim Dennis.	11
Naven Gareth	11
Hassell Brad	11
Grierson Matt	11
Burgess Ben	10
Juric Ante	10
Langdon Matt.	10
Pelosi Claudio	10
Kohler Paul	10
McManus Todd.	10
Trajanovski Kris	9
Cervinski David	9
Angeluci Jon	9
Carle Nick.	9
Harris Jerome	9
Bell Clayton	9
Middleby Robbie	9
Rufer Wynton	9
Cortes Milton	8
Roach Ned.	8
Milicevic Ljubo	8
Griffiths Joel.	8
Acevski Lou	8
Da Costa Toto	8
Ognenovski Sasa	8
Campbell Tony	7
Cardozo Pablo	7
Panapoulos Steve	7
Care Christian	7
Cervinski Adrian	7
Durakovic Mehmet	7
Halpin Troy	7
Galekovic Eugene	7
Bolton Clint	7
Hutchinson John	7
Bingley Matt	7
Brown Damien.	7
Kovacevic Ante	7
Marth Andrew	7
Awaritefe Francis	7
Ngata Harry	6
Arambasic Zlatko	6
Burton Neil	6
Cuello Joe	6
Gotis Manny	6
Miyazawa Hiroshi	6
Asanovic Aljosa	6
Crews Andrew.	6
Buonavoglia John	6
Shroj Wayne	6
Henderson Paul	5
Giannasca Tony	5
Catlin Bobby	5
Coveny Vaughan	5
Harper Andy	5
Colosimo Simon	5
Blake Ben	5
Stevens Todd.	5
Petkovic Jason	5
Vargas Rodrigo.	5
Tobin Alex	5

The Grand Final

at the

Parramatta Stadium

SUNDAY, 3rd June

WOLLONGONG WOLVES

vs

SOUTH MELBOURNE

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ROUND 16

THUNDER DOWNS SAINTS

By David Davutovic

Dandenong Thunder recorded yet another victory in its late battle against relegation with a 3-1 victory against a nine-men St Albans Saints at George Andrews Reserve on Saturday.

Thunder coach Sam Elmazi has enjoyed a great run of results in the past couple of weeks, and Saturday's game was a complete contrast to his first match in charge in Round 5 when the Saints defeated Dandenong 3-0 at Churchill Reserve.

St Albans made the best possible start when exciting young winger Mark Vidakovic blasted home a free kick after 10 minutes, that was out of George Stianakas' reach.

Dandenong were quick to reply as Daniel Radosevic tapped in from a goalmouth scramble in the 20th minute, after the ball was crossed in from the left flank.

Thunder's fighting spirit was again rewarded in the 33rd minute as Stathis Kourkoutzelos was on the end of a thru ball and slotted it past the oncoming Marijan Vunderl for a 2-1 half time lead.

The visitors' cause wasn't helped after the break when goal scorer Vidakovic received his marching orders for a second bookable offence.

Dandenong put the result beyond any reasonable doubt in the 68th minute as Christopher Nedza tucked the ball away after Vunderl could only parry the initial shot.

Substitute Ivan Zilic made quite an impact as he crossed for SlavkoRados in the 82nd minute, but the volley sailed just over the crossbar.

The Saints' frustration was epitomised when Rados conceded a penalty and was red carded in the 87th minute for a foul on Ibraim Ibraimi.

However, Vunderl expertly saved Ahmet Gurpinar's penalty.

Goran Celig was influential for Dandenong in the heart of the midfield, and his form since arriving from Croatia has been nothing short of outstanding as Elmazi continues to sing his praises, describing him as an"NSL standard player".

St Albans have now lost four matches in a row and oach Peter Crocker will desperately be looking for a win against Preston Lions at Knights Stadium on Sunday, June 10.

On the injury front, defender Ivica Klarica looks set to miss the rest of the season due to a knee injury sustained at training.a fortnight ago.

SHARKS TEAR INTO LIONS

By George Koukeris

Port Melbourne Sharks hammeredPreston 6-0 at Goodyear Stadium last Sunday, sending the Lions into relegation danger while the Sharks are getting closer of finals football in July.

Ironically, it was the Lions who ran off to a flying start with three excellent attacks on goal in the third, ninth and 14th minutes.

But the Lions failed to capitalise and the Sharks took control of the match.

Their first strike was in the 41st minute when Arthur Tsirtsakis dived superbly for a low incoming corner cross by Tass Psonis to the left side post.

In the 43rd minute, a sensational shot by Sam Poutakidis from 30yards out penetrated Preston's defensive six-man wall for 2-0.

A sending off in the 45th minute demorolised the Lions before half time.

John Angelovski chased down Tsirtsakis but made a late tackle and given a red card, reducing Preston to ten men for the second half.

The Sharks were determined to hammer home their advantage and Peter Psarros delivered the first blow of a four-goal slaughter in the opening minute of the second half.

The fourth goal was blasted from point blank range after an incoming volley landed plum in the six-yard box for Nick Tsaltas in the 63rd minute.

Six minutes later, the Sharks surged 5-0 when Poutakidis slammed hom his second goal of the match.

The Coffin was nailed shut in the 78th minute, when Psarros drove the ball into the six-yard box with a crack that rebounded off the back of Michael Bosevski straight to defender John Paul Knezevic, who applied the final touch for the sixth goal.

WEEKEND OF BIG MATCHES

There's a feast of soccer on this weekend. Victoria takes on the NSW state team at Epping stadium on Saturday, 3pm.

Entry is free, so come and support your state side against the northerners.

On Sunday, South Melbourne faces title defender Wollongong Wolves in the NSL grand final at Parramatta stadium, Sydney.

The match will be televised live in Victoria on Channel Seven at 12 noon. NSW will get to see the game live, if the stadium is sold out.

Don't forget a special post-match On the Ball program on SBS at 3pm.

There's no VPL action this weekend. Round 17 starts on June 10.

The match between Bulleen Zebras and Bentleigh Greens won't be played on Monday.

It has been rescheduled for Wednesday night at the Veneto Club.

• RESULTS •

Round 16

Essendon Royals	0	Altona East Phoenix (Papadopoulos N)	1
Preston Lions	0	Port Melb'Rne Sharks (Tsirtsakis A, Poutakidis S (2), Psarros P, Tsaltas N, Knezevic J),	6
Dandenong Thunder (Radosevic D, Kourkoutzelos S, Nedza C),	3	St. Albans Saints (Vidakovic M)	1
Altona Magic (Spink W, Della Rocca P)	1	Bulleen Zebras (Petrevski Z)	2

Heidelberg United v Bentleigh Greens

Altona beats Nine Dons

The midweek announcement of newly appointed coach George Jolevski did not change the pattern of poor results for the nine-men Essendon Royals as they went down 1-0 to Altona East at the Epping Stadium on Saturday afternoon.

A 34th minute goal from Nick Papadopoulos was enough to condemn Essendon to its 13th defeat this year and put Altona East firmer into contention for a finals place. The Dons had two players sent off in the second half.

Essendon needed to get off to a good start and looked to score after just four minutes when Idriz Pelja's cross found Rob Spence in the six-yard box.

But his effort was well saved by the Altona 'keeper.

Essendon created other chances in the eighth and 23rd minutes, but failed to score and take the advantage.

The Dons got a rude surprise Papadopoulos latched on to a through ball from the midfield and smashed the ball past Essendon keeper, Mark Di Giaocchino.

Just five minutes later, Essendon had its best chance to score. Some good play by David Minnala on the right side enabled Steve Tribuzio some valuable space on the edge of the penalty box.

But the Altona 'keeper gain denied a Royals score.

The second half started with controversy after Essendon defender David Turkovic was shown the red card for a professional foul on Papadopoulos.

Just as it seemed certain that the Altona player was to double his team's lead, a tangle of legs felled both players, which required the referee to make his crucial decision.

Ignoring the Essendon pleas from players and supporters for offside on Papadopoulos, referee Senko Rastocic had little option but to send off Turkovic after his linesman kept his flag down.

Despite the numerical setback, the ten-men Royals continued to pursue an equaliser and they got close after 63 minutes when Lachlan Armstrong's effort just slid past the far post.

Altona East seemed content with its slender lead and never really troubled Essendon for the remainder of the match. Essendon had Armstrong sent off for a foul in stoppage time to finish the match with nine men.

VIC PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER

(AFTER ROUND 16)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Heidelberg United	**15**	**9**	**2**	**4**	**22**	**14**	**29**
Port Melb'Rne Sharks	16	8	3	5	34	20	27
Bulleen Zebras	15	7	5	3	21	16	26
Altona East Phoenix	16	8	2	6	22	18	26
Green Gully Caval'Rs	15	7	4	4	25	19	25
St. Albans Saints	16	6	4	6	23	22	22
Altona Magic	16	6	4	6	22	21	22
Bentleigh Greens	14	6	3	5	21	13	21
Fawkner Blues	15	4	7	4	16	16	19
Preston Lions	16	5	4	7	14	24	19
Dandenong Thunder	16	4	5	7	19	30	17
Essendon Royals	16	0	3	13	14	40	3

Victorian Premier League

ROUND 17

SUNDAY, 10TH JUNE

Fawkner Blues vs Altona Magic
Altona East Phoenix v Green Gully Cavaliers
St Albans Saints v Preston Lions
Bentleigh Greens v Essendon Royals

MONDAY, 11TH JUNE

Pt Melbourne Sharks v Heidelberg Utd **3.00pm**
Bulleen Zebras v Dandenong Thunder **8.15pm**

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www.soccervictoria.org.au

QUEENSLAND SOCCER FEDERATION

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PREMIER LEAGUE WRAP-UPS By Glenn Davis

By Glenn Davis

Brisbane City retained their eight point lead at the top of the Queensland premier league after a scoreless draw in their local derby clash against nearest rivals Brisbane Lions at Richlands on Sunday.

Brisbane City coach Danny Wright went to Richlands expecting a brutal assault from the home side and wasn't let down although he believed a missed penalty from Brisbane Lions late in the game would have been a cruel finish.

City keeper Scott Higgins, who Wright believes deserves a Queensland jumper, turned from villain to hero after he brought down Lions' striker Reece Tollenaere in the penalty box with only two minutes remaining.

Higgins shrugged off the ensuing pressure as the hushed crowd watched the giant keeper block Tollenaere's penalty.

"I told my boys to keep their heads high after the game because we played well and probably were a touch unlucky," Wright said.

"We caught them on the break quite a few times while they opened us up only once down the right side in the first half.

"It was a typical derby game and a few rough tackles went in as expected but we would have been unlucky to lose if they had scored the penalty."

Lions coach John Ogden disagreed with Wright and thought his side deserved victory."I thought we dominated in the second half and were unlucky not to win," Ogden said.

Although the game had few highlights with neither keeper being kept busy, the match was entertaining and far from a disappointment despite the lack of goals.

Wright's biggest worry now is an ever growing backlog of fixtures Brisbane City face following the upcoming interstate clash with New South Wales and the Queensland Cup competition.

"The fixture programming this year is a disgrace and we could have no game for three weeks," he said.

"I've got six players away with the Queensland side soon and it's really going to test our depth."

Ipswich Knights scored all their goals in the second half before running out easy 4-0 winners at home to Pine Rivers.

Coach Frank Pimblett's worst fears looked like being realised at half time when Pine Rivers's defence held firm before a halftime blast saw the "coalminers" take control of the game.

Pimblett was worried before the game that his side lacked match fitness after having last weekend's match postponed due to the friendly between Queensland and the Solomon Islands at Perry Park.

"We've only had about two games in four weeks and our first half reflected that," Pimblett said.

"It was a torrid game but I wasn't happy with our first half and I told the players so at halftime.

"We showed a definite lack of enthusiasm and weren't committed in the first 45 minutes and were playing as if we already had the three points in the bag.

"After I told them a few home truths during the break we grabbed the game by the scruff of the neck and overall I was pleased with the result."

Matt Hilli was one of the Knights' star performer notching a double, including a far post header off a Pat Boyle cross.

The Knights had to rely on an own goal to break the half time deadlock before Hilli struck his double followed by Trent Griftiths who bagged the fourth in a solo 40 metre run rounding two defenders to slot home.

Rochedale Rovers coach Keiran Cooper hasn't lost any of his humour despite suffering his worst defeat as a premier league coach when Gold Coast ran riot with a 5-0 home win on Saturday night.

"Maybe Mal Bland (Mt Gravatt's coach) and I should go and have dinner together," Cooper said after hearing Mt. Gravatt also were thrashed 7-0 by Wynnum.

Rochedale trailed only 1-0 with 20 minutes remaining following a Cameron Watson header before Cooper's men fell apart.

"It was edge of the seat stuff for a while but things changed when they brought Ian Hutchinson and Steve Fitzsimmons on from bench," Cooper said.

"I thought we played well at times and controlled most of the ball but Adam Poric was simply outstanding for the Gold Coast.

"We couldn't control him and he was the main difference."

Poric, one of the league's most consistent performers, scored a double while Chris Dodd and an own goal completed the 5-0 rout.

"It's my first thrashing since I took over coaching and it feels just the same as when I was a player," Cooper said.

"I hated losing as a player and I don't like it as a coach either." Despite the heavy loss, Cooper knows he is developing a young side and is unlikely to make wholesale changes for Rochedale's next game.

Unlike Rochedale, Mt. Gravatt's loss was comprehensive in both halves as Wynnum built on a 4-0 half time lead to run out 7-0 winners.

Wynnum, who were without injured midfielder Brad Ditton, opened the scoring through Paul De Vries who side footed home a cross from Josh Rose.

De Vries figured in the second goal cutting back for Scott McLean to drive home before an own goal soon saw Mt Gravatt trail 3-0.

Wynnum pressed home their advantage and after a series of corners Anthony Roche headed the fourth to have the match wrapped up at the interval.

De Vries ran onto a perfect ball into the box to pick up his second for the match while Roche also followed up with his double with a well taken goal rounding a defender 40 metres out with one touch before slotting home Wynnum's sixth.

Wynnum's Steve Foreshaw drove the final nail into Mt. Gravatt's coffin late in the game with a powerful far post header off another corner.

Wynnum coach Peter Tokesi singled out Rose, the 19-year-old Rockhampton product, for special mention after the match.

"Josh did well and has been most consistent all year but I had to replace him with 20 minutes to go when he got a slight knock," Tokesi said.

Taringa continued their recent resurgence with a 2-1 away win over Toowoomba.

XXXX LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Brisbane City	**12**	**9**	**3**	**0**	**31**	**9**	**30**
Wynnum	11	6	4	1	30	13	22
Brisbane Lions	11	6	4	1	28	17	22
Gold Coast City	12	6	3	3	24	15	21
IPSW Knights	11	5	5	1	25	13	20
Rochedale Rov.	12	5	2	5	13	15	15
Taringa Rovers	12	4	3	5	13	15	15
Biberg Waves	12	4	1	7	21	24	13
Eastern Suburbs	11	3	3	5	16	29	12
Tiwmba Raiders	12	3	1	8	13	24	10
Mt Gravatt	12	2	1	9	17	41	7
Pine River Utd	12	1	2	9	15	36	5

ROUND 12

Brisbane Lions	0	Brisbane City	0
IPSW Knights	4	Pine Rivers Utd	0
Gold Coast City	5	Rochedale Rovers	0
TiWmba Raiders	1	Taringa Rovers	2
BiBerg Waves	1	Eastern Suburbs	3
Wynnum	7	Mt Gravatt	0

DIVISION 1 SEMI PRO

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
North Star	**14**	**9**	**4**	**1**	**45**	**16**	**31**
The Gap	14	9	2	3	29	14	29
Souths Utd	14	8	3	3	34	20	27
Albany Creek	14	8	3	3	25	22	27
Brisbane Oly. Utd	14	8	2	4	28	19	26
Rocklea Uutd	14	7	4	3	23	19	26
Slacks Creek	14	7	3	4	33	27	24
Redlands Utd	14	6	3	5	28	26	21
Mitchelton	14	6	2	6	20	19	20
Grange Thistle	14	3	3	8	17	26	21
Capalaba	14	3	3	8	17	36	12
Newmarket	14	3	1	10	20	35	10
Acacia Ridge	14	1	3	10	16	35	6
North Pine	14	1	2	11	10	31	5

ROUND 14

Rocklea Utd	0	The Gap	2
North Star	2	Mitchelton	2
Rocklea United	2	Souths United	1
Grange Thistle	3	North Pine	1
Capalaba	0	Brisbane Oly. Utd	1
Albany Creek	0	Redlands Utd	4
Acacia Ridge	1	Slacks Creek	2

QUEENSLAND PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES (ROUND 13)

Saturday 2nd June	
Pine Rivers v Wynnum	7.00pm
Sunday 3rd June	
Eastern Suburbs v TBA Raiders	3.00pm
Taringa Rovers v Gold Coast	2.45pm
Saturday 9th June	
Mt Gravatt v Brisbane Lions	6.00pm
Rochedale Rovers v IPSW Knights	7.00pm
Sunday 10th June	
Brisbane City v Bundaberg Waves	Postponed

ROUND 12 RESULTS

GOLD COAST CITY	5	ROCHEDALE ROVERS	0
C. Watson, K. Dodd, A. Poric (2), Own goal.			
TOOWOOMBA RAIDERS	1	TARINGA ROVERS	2
C. Hackwood		*L. Morley, N. Kuyper*	
WYNNUM	7	MT GRAVATT	0
P. Devries (2), A. Roche (2), S. Forshaw, Own goal, S. McLean			
IPSWICH KNIGHTS	4	PINE RIVERS	0
M. Hilli (2), T. Griffiths, Own goal.			
BRISBANE LIONS	0	BRISBANE CITY	0
BUNDABERG WAVES	1	EASTERN SUBURBS	3
C. Hawkins		*S. Coffey (2), M. Hughes*	

NSW Youth League Results

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE

GRADE 13: Fairfield Bulls 0 Parramatta Eagles 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Newcastle United 3, Wollongong Wolves 3 Leichhardt Tigers 2, St George 0 Sutherland Shire 0, Northern Spirit 8 Sydney United 2, Bankstown City Cubs 2 Canterbury Marrickville 3, Blacktown City Demons 2 Marconi Stallions 0, Central Coast Coasties 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Penrith Panthers 0 Sydney Olympic 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Macarthur Rams 1.

GRADE 14: Fairfield Bulls 0 Parramatta Eagles 6, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Newcastle United 2, Wollongong Wolves 5 Leichhardt Tigers 0, St George 1 Sutherland Shire 1, Northern Spirit 5 Sydney United 1, Bankstown City Cubs 3 Canterbury Marrickville 0, Blacktown City Demons 0 Marconi Stallions 1, Central Coast Coasties 3 Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Penrith Panthers 0 Sydney Olympic 2, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Macarthur Rams 3.

GRADE 15: Fairfield Bulls 0 Parramatta Eagles 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 2 Newcastle United 1, Wollongong Wolves 2 Leichhardt Tigers 2, St George 0 Sutherland Shire 1, Northern Spirit 3 Sydney United 2, Bankstown City Cubs 4 Canterbury Marrickville 2, Blacktown City Demons 1 Marconi Stallions 5, Central Coast Coasties 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Penrith Panthers 0 Sydney Olympic 6, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 Macarthur Rams 0.

GRADE 17: Fairfield Bulls 0 Parramatta Eagles 1, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 2 Newcastle United 1, Wollongong Wolves 3 Leichhardt Tigers 1, St George 2 Sutherland Shire 2, Northern Spirit 4 Sydney United 1, Bankstown City Cubs 2 Canterbury Marrickville 0, Blacktown City Demons 2 Marconi Stallions 1, Central Coast Coasties 1 Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Penrith Panthers 2 Sydney Olympic 4, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Macarthur Rams 0.

SUPER CADET LEAGUE

GRADE 11: St George 2 Sutherland Shire 0, Northern Spirit 0 Sydney United 3, Bankstown City Cubs 0 Canterbury Marrickville 1, Blacktown City Demons 7 Marconi Stallions 0, Central Coast Coasties 1 Manly Warringah Dolphins 2, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Macarthur Rams 4.

GRADE 12: St George 0 Sutherland Shire 1, Northern Spirit 2 Sydney United 0, Bankstown City Cubs 2 Canterbury Marrickville 1, Blacktown City Demons 2 Marconi Stallions 0, Central Coast Coasties 2 Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Macarthur Rams 2.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

Otto Bader

SECOND GRAND FINAL - an astonishing feat, the Wolves reached their 2nd NSL Grand Final in two seasons, congratulation to a group of exceptional soccer players, a team still maturing according to the coach, able reaching even more success.

Some players are coming off contract, considering offers reprtedly huge form other clubs, perhaps might keep in mind that the present side works as a team-unit and makes the players look good, It does not mean that they become overnight-wonders to chase glory at other clubs.

Players who have left the Wollongong club did not really make a success with their new sides, possibly silently regretting leaving successful surroundings. Fans of the Wolves are looking on with interest, hoping the team does not disintegrate.

The mighty dollar attracts everyone but in the end personal satisfaction and happiness weights more. Let's keep our fingers crossed that at least the nucleus of the present team stays around for another great soccer season.

GRAND FINAL LOCATION HOME/AWAY - reports by the club indicate that the NSL Grand Final with the Wollongong Wolves for the second time in a row challenging for the title, will be shifted to Sydney. Soccer Australia refers to rules and regulations which determine the venue.

Surely a bit of lateral thinking combined with common sense to support soccer in regional areas should be applied to promote the achievements of the local soccer club, play the final at WIN Stadium, it will be a full house.

The Wolves deserve a home fixture, first having made the NSL championship decider again and secondly being robbed by FIFA of substantial financial gains.

The faithful fans of the Wolves - ordinary sports lovers with families - are not graced with much wealth, and despite other financial burdens, they do dig deep to fork-out the admission fee for every Wolves home game for mum, dad and kids, they deserve a fair go.

Community leaders support the push to bring the fixture to Wollongong. Word from Soccer Australia is that the Grand Final will be played at Parramatta Stadium and that's it. Ticket sales are as yet not available, not indicating an efficient administration by the ruling body.

CAPTAIN'S COURAGE - recognised by South Melbourne when Wolves Matt Horsley was presented with a special gift for his seriously-ill small daughter causing him and his family heartache.

Despite that burden the Wolves captain took the field and is expected to play in the Grand Final.

COMPENSATE CLUBS - one formula FIFA could adopt would be to give all 12 clubs that qualified for the now-cancelled WCC in Spain, the minimum prize money of $5.2 million.

Oceania should strongly support a claim by the Wolves as well as Soccer Australia. The Japanese association is up in arms , critical of FIFA's handling of the affair. Approximately 90 fans from Wollongong booked their trip to Spain with UTAG Figtree Travel Service to leave on July 27th to visit La Coruna and Madrid.

Questions are being asked who will refund their money already being deposited, not counting personal inconvenience as to time taken-off work, etc.

In comparison with Europe's and South America's big clubs the minnows like Wollongong have been dealt a mighty blow by FIFA'S decision. Not only a financial loss, possible fatal, but also a prestige loss for club and players. FIFA does not understand the damage done to the soccer code in general in this country with the cancellation.

Sasho Petrovski: First Wolves' player to score 20 goals in a season.

STRIKER AIMS HIGH - Wolves striker Sasho Petrovski has become the first player in the club's history to score 20 goals in one season. His target has elevated him to the top of the NSL scoring chart. He is not finished yet and has another chance to increase his tally in the forthcoming Grand final.

LOCALLY - Premier league club Wollongong Olympic has changed soccer coaches due to poor results. New man in charge is Peter Beggs (previously with Bulli) to replace John Frew. The club felt a change was needed since the side was not performing. It was not necessary the coach's fault, since injuries and suspensions weakened the squad. Time will tell if results improve.

ICU Premier League round 8, results @ comments - a total of 26 goals scored, several surprise scores, four teams at top of table are consolidating their place. Points Table: Kemblawarra 20, Coniston 18, Port Kembla 17, Balgownie 14, Olympic 13, West 10, Lysaght 10, Cringila 10, Bulli 8, Picton 17, Shoalhaven 7, North 0.

Picton v Wollongong Olympic 3:1, a real upset, top win for the home team, with goals from Colin Luff (2) and Craig Usher, Olympic scored through Rodney Hill, playing next away Bulli with a chance, Olympic plays Shoalhaven, a must win situation.

Northern United v Bulli 1:3, leaving North in bottom spot, goals for Bulli from Daniel Hastings (2) and Alan Flack, North scored a conciliation goal, unable to turn the tide, playing next Balgownie, Bulli meet Picton at home.

Western Suburbs v Balgownie 1:2, destroying any hope for West to move up, despite scoring first with veteran striker Don Martinovski, the visitors countered with two goals from Joel Bruni, they meet next North, West plays Coniston, a very tough opponent.

Lysaght v Coniston 2:4, the visitors finding form, a hat-trick from Anthony Guido and one goal from John Chapman made sure of the win, the home side scored through Mark Thompson and Shane Rayner, they play next Cringila, Coniston meets West.

Kemblawarra v Cringila 2:2, embarrassing the competition leaders the visitors scored first with Oliver Sekuloski and Chris Spasevski before the home side equalised towards he end with goals from Jason Matthews and Cord Tolson, they play next Port Kembla, a vital clash to decide the top spot, Cringila meet next Lysaght.

Shoalhaven v Port Kembla 1:4, a solid win for the more favoured visitors, leaving the host in relegation trouble, they play next Olympic away, not an easy task. Port Kembla meet Kemblawarra in a top of the table battle.

In a double-header three wash-out games resulted in Olympic winning 3:1 against North, West defeated Picton 3:1 and Kemblawarra defeated Balgownie 2:1.

ICU First Division round 7 results @ Comments: a total of 36 goals scored, a few big results, two washed-out games scheduled to be played as double-headers. Points Table of the leading teams = Albion Park 16, Tarra 15, Warilla 15 (one game in hand), Helensburgh 15 and Highlands 15.

Helensburgh v Woonona 2:5, a shock defeat for the home side, playing next away to Ruse, Woonona meet Tarrawanna next.

Bellambi v Dapto 3:0, lifting the home side up the table, playing next Illawarra United, expect to do well.

Kiama v Tarrawanna 1:1, clash of two well placed teams, equal in strength, the home side to play next at Highlands, Tarra meet Woonona.

South Coast v Albion Park 1:6, the visitors aiming for promotion, too strong for the home team, who play now Barbarians, Albion Park meet University.

Warilla v Ruse 6:0, a convincing win catapulting the home team up the table for a possible top spot, they play next Fernhill, Ruse face Helensburgh next.

Shellharbour City v Illawarra United 1:0, close result, a first win for the young home side still finding their feet playing next Berkeley, United play Bellambi next.

Highlands v Berkeley 3:1, always tough to play up at Mittagong who face next Kiama, Berkeley meet Shellharbour City.

Fernhill v Barbarians 5:1, a poor result for the visitors who played much better on Sunday in a washed-out fixture against Woonona, now facing South Coast, Fernhill play next Warilla.

JUNIOR RESULTS - only one received - from Shellharbour = U/6 Roo-Ball enjoyed their game against Figtree, U/10's B lost to Figtree, U/10 A won against Thirroul, U/11's drew with Kiama, U/12's drew with Figtree, U/13's lost by the odd goal to Oak Flats.

Referee -Quiz : a defending player uses his shin guards in his outstretched hand to prevent a certain goal from being scored and the ball went out for a corner. What should the referee decide? (Answer: Penalty, red card).

Winter Super League

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BULLS CONTINUE THEIR CHARGE

Manly Warringah 2 AC United 3

Manly-Warringah went down to AC United 3-2 at Cromer Park, where the visitors at one stage held a 3-0 lead.

Nathan Rivera scored early for AC who had recently beaten then-leaders Rockdale in their last upset and appear the bogey team for some this year.

Manly appeared jaded after their Thursday night win over Rockdale.

Dominic Oliverio in the 49th and Robbie Sacco in the 75th had AC coasting until two late strikes from Jack Sobczyk made it look a lot more respectable for the Dolphins.

Rockdale City 2 Stanmore Hawks 1

In a match where ex-NSL star striker Francis Awaritefe made his debut for the Rockdale City Suns, a crowd of over 500 witnessed the Suns bouncing back to form and into the winners circle after three consecutive losses.

In the end it was two brilliant 30 metre plus shots from the brilliant Leo Carle that clinched the win for Rockdale in a game they dominated and deserved to win.

The lone goal for Stanmore Hawks was scored by free kick specialist Eddie Briscoe in typical fashion.

Dulwich Hill 2 Hurstville City 0

Two goals from the enigmatic Steve Karavatakis gave a disjointed Dulwich Hill a 2-0 victory over the Hurstville City Minotaurs at Arlington Oval.

The scoreline should have been much different if it weren't for some terrible finishing from both sides. Karavatakis opened up the scoring in the 9th minute after he beat Minotaurs keeper Stacy Alogdellis with a deft shot following a goal mouth scramble.

Both sides created some good opportunities in an open second half before Karavatakis sealed the win and top spot on the NSWSL ladder when he converted an Achilleas Markopoulos cross with a running header late in the game.

Fairfield Bulls 3 Fraser Park Jets 0

The Fairfield Bulls continued their charge up the NSWSF Super League table with a clinical 3-0 victory over the Fraser Park Jets at Nineveh Field, on a cold Saturday evening.

Marc Hoenselaars continued his rich vein of scoring form with a fine second half double, moving to 11 goals for the season.

In a match of two halves, Fairfield made the Jets pay for some defensive lapses, the first on 55 minutes when Con Anastasiadis palmed a Duncan Alger mis-kick into the net. Hoenselaars then took four minutes to put the result beyond doubt.

A left footer from the edge of the box in the 66th, followed by a tap-in from a Javier Mancino square, twenty from time.

Bankstown City 7 MSC Liverpool 0

Bankstown extended their unbeaten streak to six games with a comprehensive 7-0 win over MSC Liverpool at Jensen Park.

The home side looked promising from the outset as Liverpool struggled to tame the aggressive Lions.

First half goals to Robert Issa, Robert Gomez and Jimmy Aschner set up a commanding 3-0 lead at the break.

The second term saw the Lions continue their dominance with further goals going to George Issa, Iain MacDonald, goalkeeper Zlatko Josevski and another to Aschner. Although outclassed, Liverpool didn't help their cause by giving away three penalties during the match and losing both captain Peter Moon and goalkeeper Adam Confoy to injury in the first half.

Macarthur Rams 0 Hajduk Wanderers 1

Hajduk Wanderers scored a hard fought 1-0 win over the Macarthur Rams at Lynwood Park on Saturday night.

After a tight first half, the Wanderers struck right on half time from a set piece.

A curling free kick was sent into the box from Costello, which was eloquently headed in by Hajduk playmaker Ellul from 5 yards.

A hungry Rams team came out in the second half determined to get a result, but despite 45 minutes of pressure on Hajduk they were unable to find the goal.

Rams captain Bourke came close when his shot rattled against the post in the 77th minute and striker Gunn should have been awarded a penalty in the dying seconds of the game after he was savagely cut down.

In the end, the Hajduk defence held strong and held on to all 3 points to bring them to 11 points on the ladder, only 1 point behind the Rams.

AWARITEFE: A RISING SUN

Francis Awaritefe (left) Rochdale City Suns latest recruit has a wealth of experience ifrom a glittering career in the NSL.

NSW Winter Super League club, Rockdale City Suns, have signed recently retired NSL striker Francis Awaritefe in a bid to boost their strike force and halt a mid season slide.

Awaritefe debuted for the Suns as they collected a crucial 2-1 victory over competition struugglers, the Stanmore Hawks last Sunday.

Rockdale City spokesperson, Mendo Cklamovski, believes the former Socceroo will inject some timely experience as well as class.

"We felt that we needed more strike power up front and Francis had both the experience and proven goal-scoring record to fit that need.

"Because of his great career in the NSL, we felt that Francis would also act as a crowd puller to our games."

NSL CAREER

Melbourne Knights: 89 -91/92: 98 games/43 goals
South Melbourne: 93-94/95: 73/34
Marconi Stallions: 95-99/00: 138 /40
Sydney United: 00/01: 22/7
TOTAL: 323 games and 124 goals

RESULTS
(Round 11)

Manly Warringah *(J Sobczyk 81/93m)*	2	**AC United** *(N Rivera 11m D Oliverio 49m R Sacco 75m)*	3
Rockdale City Suns *(L Carle 39/52m)*	2	**Stanmore Hawks** *(E Briscoe 11m)*	1
Dulwich Hill *(Karavatakis 9m/89m)*	2	**Hurstville City**	0
Fairfield Bulls *(og 55m M Hoenselaars 66/70m)*	3	**Fraser Park Jets**	0
Bankstown City Lions *(R Issa 2m R Gomez 8m J Aschner 27m Penalty/64m G Issa 48ml MacDonald 51m Z Josevski 58m Penalty)*	7	**MSC Liverpool**	0
Macarthur Rams	0	**Hajduk Wanderers** *(Ellul 45m)*	1

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE LADDER
(After Round 11)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dulwich Hill	**10**	**7**	**2**	**1**	**22**	**13**	**23**
Bankstown City Lions	10	6	2	2	22	7	20
Manly Warringah	11	6	2	3	27	18	20
Fairfield Bulls	10	5	3	2	33	15	18
Rockdale City Suns	11	5	2	4	24	19	17
H'ville City Minotaurs	10	4	2	4	10	13	14
Macarthur Rams	11	3	3	5	15	15	12
Fraser Park	10	3	2	5	20	23	11
AC United	10	3	2	5	12	17	11
Hajduk Wanderers	10	3	2	5	12	18	11
Stanmore Hawks	9	2	2	5	8	17	8
MSC Liverpool	10	1	2	7	13	43	5

For further information see: www.soccernsw.com.au

Winter Super League

www.soccernsw.com.au

INTERSTATE CLASH

SATURDAY 2nd JUNE
VICTORIA vs NEW SOUTH WALES
Epping Stadium (Melbourne)
Kick-Off: 3.00pm

ROUND 12

SUNDAY 3rd JUNE

Macarthur Rams v Stanmore Hawks		Lynwood Park
First Grade: 5.00pm	U/21: 3.00pm	U/18: 1.00pm
Fairfield Bulls v Bankstown City Lions		Nineveh Field
First Grade: 3.00pm	U/21: 1.00pm	U/18: 11.00am
Dulwich Hill v Fraser Park Jets		Arlington Oval
First Grade: 3.00pm	U/21: 1.00pm	U/18: 11.00am
Rockdale City v Hurstville City Minotaurs		Rockdale Ilinden SG
First Grade: 3.00pm	U/21: 1.00pm	U/18: 11.00am
Manly Warringah v Hadjuk Wanderers		Cromer Park
First Grade: 3.00pm	U/21: 1.00pm	U/18: 11.00am
AC United v M.S.C Liverpool		Abruzzi Oval
First Grade: 3.00pm	U/21: 1.00pm	U/18: 11.00am

Catch up with all the latest news on the Winter Super League and other NSW Soccer news on our website:

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CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Bayern Munich's goalkeeper Oliver Kahn lifts the European Cup in the San Siro Stadium in Milan. Bayern won the trophy beating Valencia 5-4 on penalties.

Bayern's 25-year vigil ends

BAYERN MUNICH	5
VALENCIA	4
(Penalty shootout)	

Bayern Munich won the European Cup for the first time since 1976 when they defeated Valencia 5-4 on penalties after the Champions League final ended in a 1-1 draw at the San Siro Stadium, last week.

Bayern's hero in the shoot-out was goalkeeper Oliver Kahn who made three outstanding saves including the decisive one from Valencia defender Maurico Pellegrino on the 14th spot kick.

The Spanish side, who went ahead in the third minute from one of three penalties awarded in the first 50 minutes of the game, were beaten in the final for the second successive year.

They have yet to win European club soccer's biggest trophy while Bayern have now won it four times.

Bayern, beaten by two injury goals in the 1999 final by Manchester United, came from behind in both regulation time and the shoot-out and just about deserved their victory in a physical, scrappy match.

Valencia skipper Gaizka Mendieta put Valencia ahead in the third minute of the match after Bayern's Swedish international defender Patrick Andersson handled in his own penalty area after a melee created by a powerful run and cross from John Carew.

Despite protests by the Bayern players that Mendieta's shot hit Andersson's arm while he was on the ground, Dutch referee Dick Jol was in no doubt and Mendieta swept Valencia ahead.

Bayern spurned a golden opportunity to level after just six minutes when Jol awarded them a penalty after Valencia defender Jocelyn Angloma sent Bayern skipper Stefan Effenberg sprawling with a clumsy challenge inside the Valencia box.

Bayern Munich players celebrate with the European Cup after the Champions League final at the San Siro Stadium in Milan.

But Mehmet Scholl's spot-kick lacked pace and accuracy, allowing goalkeeper Santiago Canizares to save with his legs and send the ball ballooning over the bar to safety.

The third penalty of the game came after halftime when Amedeo Carboni handled an Elber cross in front of his own goal.

He claimed he was pushed by Carsten Jancker, who had come on as a halftime substitute for Willy Sagnol, but Effenberg made no mistake from the spot to pull Bayern level.

With no further goals the match became the first final to be decided on penalties since 1996 and the sixth in the competition's history.

Hasan Salihamidzic, Alexander Zickler, Effenberg, Bixente Lizarazu and Thomas Linke all scored for Bayern, while Paulo Sergio and Andersson missed.

Gaixka Mendieta, John Carew, Ruben Baraja, and Kily Gonzalez scored for Valencia while Zlatko Zahovic, Amedeo Carboni and ultimately Pelligrino all missed.

THE PRESSURE WAS UNBELIEVABLE — KAHN

Goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, Bayern Munich's hero after saving three penalties against Valencia, said he had felt under huge pressure in the shoot-out at the end of the Champions League final last week.

"The pressure was unbelievable. I can't explain it but I think it was a combination of luck, intuition and thank God!" Kahn said.

Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld and club president Franz Beckenbauer lavished praise on the Germany keeper.

"It is great to be able to take the cup back to Munich. The champions league is something unique for any club... Oliver Kahn was the absolute star and we have him to thank," said Hitzfeld.

Beckenbauer said Kahn was the reason why Bayern had won the Champions League.

"We were the more active and better side over 120 minutes," said Beckenbauer. "Naturally you have to be lucky to win in a penalty shoot-out but this team deserved it.

"Three times we nearly did it and today it finally happened." Bayern have lost three finals since last winning the trophy in 1976.

"Oliver Kahn has been fantastic in the Champions League. He is the main reason that we won the Cup," said Beckenbauer.

Valencia's goalkeeper Santiago Canizares despairs on the field after the penalty shoot-out defeat in the San Siro Stadium, Milan.

Bayern Munich's players stand arm-in-arm during the penalty shoot-out in the Champions League final against Valencia at the San Siro stadium in Milan. Bayern Munich won the European Cup for the first time since 1976 when they beat Valencia 5-4 on penalties after a final that finished 1-1 after extra time.

CUPER FEELS PAIN OF DEFEAT

Valencia coach Hector Cuper lamented another lost opportunity following his side's heartbreaking defeat on penalties to Bayern Munich in the final of the Champions League last week.

It was a second successive Champions League final defeat for Valencia — they lost 3-0 to Real Madrid last year — and a hat-trick of losses for Cuper, whose Real Mallorca side were beaten by Lazio in the Cup Winners' Cup final the previous year.

"Another one has passed us by," Cuper sighed in an interview with Spanish state television after the game.

"It's a very painful moment but we'll have to bear it."

French defender Jocelyn Angloma apologised to the Valencia fans for denying them a party.

"It's bad luck, but that's football," he said. "The fans won't be able to celebrate again. I'm sorry.

"We did everything we could to win and so did Bayern but it was very difficult. We've lost again. We just have to play our remaining league games and try to qualify for the competition again."

Delirious German fans welcome Bayern home

Tens of thousands of Bayern Munich fans packed the team's home town in the early hours of Thursday last week to receive their team after the German league winners beat Valencia in the Champions League final in Milan.

Sounding their car horns, chanting football slogans and singing songs like "We are the champions", Bayern fans let off fireworks, packed bars in the centre of the Bavarian capital and brought traffic to a standstill, as ecstatic Germans welcomed back the European Cup after a rather extended 25-year wait.

"Basically the city centre is completely blocked and it will stay that way for quite some time," said a police spokesman.

"This is the biggest triumph in 25 years," said 25-year-old Philip Neukirchen who went into the town centre after the game.

Fans waving red, white and blue Bayern scarves mobbed a German television journalist reporting live from the scene, draping him with a club flag and spraying him with champagne and beer.

"This is the best thing that has ever happened to me. It is amazing. We are going to keep going until the morning and then go straight to the Marienplatz," said 18-year-old Chris Juergens.

The Marienplatz square in the centre of Munich is where the fans always welcome their heroes back and the reception was all the warmer given that Thursday was a public holiday in Germany for Ascension Day.

The police did not stop the celebrations. "As long as they don't do anything illegal, we'll let them party," said the spokesman, adding that no trouble was reported so far.

Bayern Munich supporters celebrate late into the night, on the streets of Munich after winning the Champions League trophy in Milan. Bayern Munich beat Spanish team Valencia 5-4 on penalties.

Kaiser hails heroic Kahn

Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer said goalkeeper Oliver Kahn was the reason why Bayern had won the Champions League final after a penalty shoot-out last week.

"We were the more active and better side over 120 minutes," said Beckenbauer. "Naturally you have to be lucky to win in a penalty shoot-out but this team deserved it.

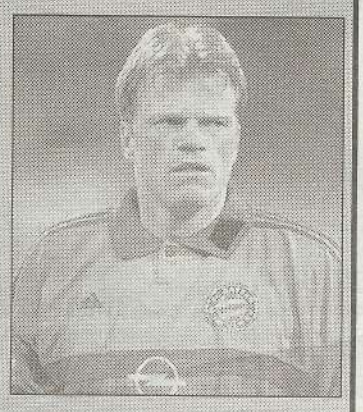
"Three times we nearly did it and today it finally happened." Bayern have lost three finals since last winning the trophy in 1976.

"Oliver Kahn has been fantastic in the Champions League. He is the main reason that we won the Cup," said Beckenbauer.

Kahn saved three penalties in the shoot-out.

Bayern midfielder Mehmet Scholl said: "We have an amazing goalkeeper. He is priceless and today he won us the trophy."

Defender Samuel Kuffour said: "Nothing happens without God and with God we won today."



Oliver Kahn: Bayern's hero.

Blatter denies bribery allegation

FIFA boss Sepp Blatter has rejected claims he took bribes from failed sports marketing group ISMM-ISL.

The president of world soccer's governing body also said on last week, the loss to his organisation could be much bigger than so far expected.

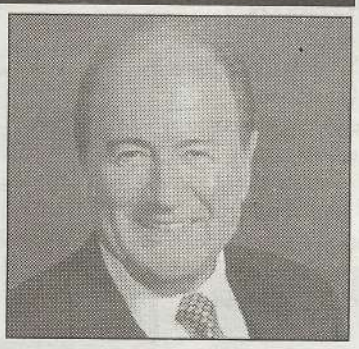
"In the worst case it could be 100 million Swiss francs,"

Blatter told the Blick daily in an interview ahead of a news conference at which FIFA will give more details about the situation following the ISL bankruptcy.

A court in the Swiss town of Zug last week declared ISMM-ISL officially bankrupt after French media group Vivendi Universal last week withdrew a rescue offer. ISMM-ISL was the marketing agent for the 2002 World Cup finals.

Blatter had come under fire for letting the ISL affair run out of hand and there has even been media speculation ISL had a slush fund to bribe sports officials, including the FIFA boss.

"When German newspapers such as Die Welt ot Die Suddeutsche write that I would be corrupt, then they have to prove it or they have to expect legal repercussions," Blatter said.



Sepp Blatter: FIFA president.

ISMM-ISL, created in 1982, was the world number one in sports marketing. The company is private and owned by the heirs of German Adi Dassler, who founded sports wear company Adidas.

The marketing agency drummed up many millions of dollars in revenues for sports organisations, who now have to review their own marketing plans. The International Olympic Committee has already set up its own marketing body, headed by a former ISL executive, and FIFA is now planning to do the same.

The group fell into financial difficulties when it moved away from its core activities and become involved in Brazilian football clubs and sports other than soccer.

Ecuador coach quits after near-fatal attack

Ecuador's national coach Hernan Dario Gomez said he would not go back to Ecuador because he feared for his life after he was shot in the leg in early May.

"At the moment my decision is not to go back. It's out of control, no one can guarantee my safety," Gomez, who is Colombian, told local radio from his home town Medellin.

Gomez was shot and had his nose broken in an attack early this month in a hotel lobby in the coastal city of Guayaquil.

Police detained the president of second division club Santa Rita.

The coach, who at first said he would return to Ecuador, was on the brink of taking the country's team to their first World Cup finals and in March celebrated the greatest moment of his career when his team beat Brazil for the first time.

But Ecuador's chances could now be seriously weakened. Players including Alex Aguinaga, Ivan Kaviedes and Agustin Delgado have said they will quit the team if the coach goes.

With six games remaining, Ecuador are third in the table with 22 points. But, sixth-placed Uruguay are just four points behind and only the first four are guaranteed a trip to next year's World Cup finals in Korea and Japan.

Gomez had been due back in Ecuador this week to prepare for June's qualifier with Peru. After he was shot, hundreds of Ecuadoreans took to the streets to call for him to stay on.

The coach said he was also worried about being called to testify in an Ecuadorean court.

Police have investigated the alleged role in the attack of one of the sons of Ecuador's fugitive former President Abdala Bucaram. Another Bucaram son is a Santa Rita player.

Violence has also overshadowed preparations for South America's Copa America national team championship due to be held in Colombia in July. The South American Soccer Confederation says the championship will go ahead despite a series of car bomb attacks in cities due to hold matches.

One blast last week killed eight people and injured 130 in a fashionable cafe district of the city of Medellin, due to host tournament favorites Argentina.

ORLANDO PIRATES ARE S-AFRICAN CHAMPIONS

Three second-half goals handed Orlando Pirates the South African premier league title.

Last week as they swept past Ajax Cape Town to win their first championship in seven years.

Goals from Pollen Ndlanya, Jerry Sikhosana and Thabang Lebese gave the Soweto club a 3-0 win at Springs. The victory put the club clear of the chasing pack in their penultimate game of the season.

Ndlanya settled their first-half jitters with a goal seven minutes after the interval and former South African international Sikhosana added a second two minutes later.

Lebese rounded off a solid showing with a stunning drive from the edge of the box in the 70th minute.

"We were nervous in the first half but I told my players go out there in second half, enjoy it, and win the game," said coach Gordon Igesund.

The result ended a run of six matches without a win for Pirates who had seemingly contrived to throw away their runaway lead at the top of the standings from earlier in the campaign.

Pirates, one of the most successful clubs in the country, last won the title in 1994.

WORLD

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

The Champions League Final at the San Siro Stadium in Milan only emphasised the state of Italian football on the European scene this year.

The magnificent venue, in one of Europe's most cosmopolitan cities, played host to the biggest event in club football in 2001 and the locals hardly seemed to notice.

It wasn't until the actual day that the media decided to rate it as the major sporting news story. Basically there was no Italian team and therefore the lukewarm interest in the game by the locals.

Not to mention it again but the performances by Italian teams on the European stage this year were nothing short of embarrassing for the country that once dominated European club football.

Milan as a city was arguably the football capital of the world from the late 80's to the mid 90's. AC Milan won five and Inter one during that period.

However, besides AC Milan's title win in 1999 under Alberto Zaccheroni as coach, not much has happened in the city.

AC Milan are always consistently good finishing higher up on the ladder while Inter seem to go from bad to worse, year in and year out.

The football capital of Italy at the moment is definitely Rome - Roma and Lazio are setting the pace this year and Lazio are still defending champions.

Last weekend's games featured Inter v Lazio and Roma v AC Milan - a tale of two cities who are rivals in every field.

From politics (Prime Minister from Milan and President from Rome) to business to football, Rome v Milan has always produced that something extra special.

At the 1990 World Cup, the Final was held in Rome but the opening game was held in Milan as a compromise.

Footballing wise, especially in 2001, it is not even a contest. The only team keeping genuine pace with the Roman teams is Juventus but then again this is sort of expected from the Turin giants.

Italian teams next year will again be on the European stage but hoping for far better results.

Champions League places go to Roma, Lazio, Juventus and Parma while AC Milan and possibly Inter will have to settle for a UEFA Cup place.

Last week's final in Milan would have been an ideal opportunity for an Italian team to showcase Serie A football on a world stage but it wasn't to be.

◆◆◆◆

Chievo lead the Serie B and look set to head into the Serie A for the first time ever next year. But just who are Chievo?

They are the ugly ducklings of Verona. Their full name is Chievo Verona and their city rivals are Hellas Verona who are currently languishing near the bottom of the Serie A.

Hellas Verona are generally called just 'Verona' and Chievo Verona are usually referred to as just 'Chievo'. They play at the same home ground but the city of Romeo and Juliet generally supports only Verona.

Chievo matches attract a mere fraction of the crowd that Verona matches do. Being a Chievo supporter in Verona is akin to being a Manchester City supporter in Manchester!

However, next year this may all change. The city's 'ugly duckling' team will swap places with the city's 'pride and joy' team. Serie A football will still be played therefore at the Bentegodi Stadium but carrying the banner will be Chievo.

This is a victory for those small unfancied teams. In the end this is what football is really all about. Go Chievo!

◆◆◆◆

On the subject of promotion it looks like Torino are returning to the Serie A again. In recent years this team has oscillated between the Serie A and B.

Torino are one those teams that have a niche in the hearts of many and therefore have a rightful place in the Serie A.

The hill of Superga, just outside Turin, is a shrine to post war Italian football.

In 1949 a plane crash killed perhaps the greatest club side of all time - the entire Torino team.

So good was that team that it contained 10 out of the 11 starting players for the Italian national team of the day.

It took Italy about 20 years to re-build a good team again (the 1970 World Cup) and Torino didn't win another Serie A title until 1976.

It will also be good to see another Serie A derby return as well - Juventus v Torino as this derby rates as one the most competitive of Italian derbies.

Torino 'belong' in the Serie A and when they are in the lower division there is definitely something missing.

ITALIAN SERIE A

LECCE 1 PARMA 2

African footballer of the year Patrick Mboma earned Parma victory with a goal nine minutes from time.

Lecce had taken the lead from a free kick by Willian Viali in the 57th minute. Savo Milosevic equalised for Parma in the 63rd minute after good work by Mboma.

BRESCIA 2 VICENZA 1

Brescia pulled clear of the relegation zone with their ninth win of the season.

Forward Dario Hubner gave Brescia the lead from the penalty spot after 10 minutes with his 16th goal of the season.

Midfielder Jonathan Bachini made it 2-0 in the 43rd after a good through ball from Roberto Baggio.

Gianluca Comotto scored a late consolation goal for Vicenza four minutes from time.

VERONA 5 BOLOGNA 4

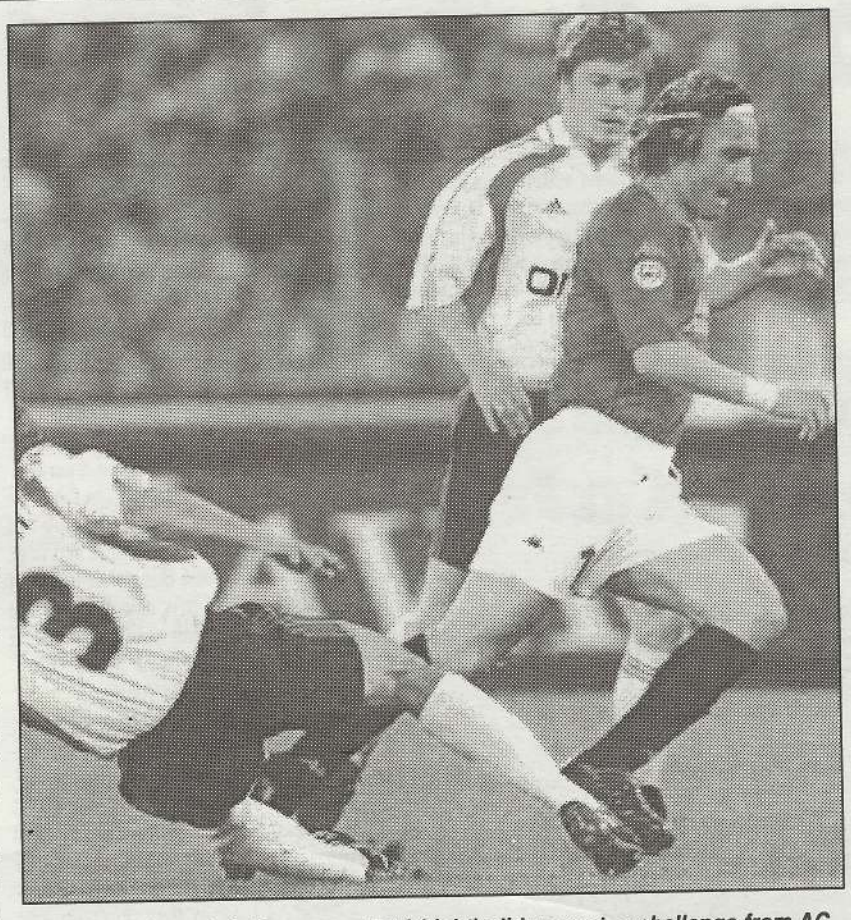
Verona earned a precious win in their bid to avoid relegation.

Renato Olive gave Bologna a second minute lead but Emiliano Salvetti equalised a minute later.

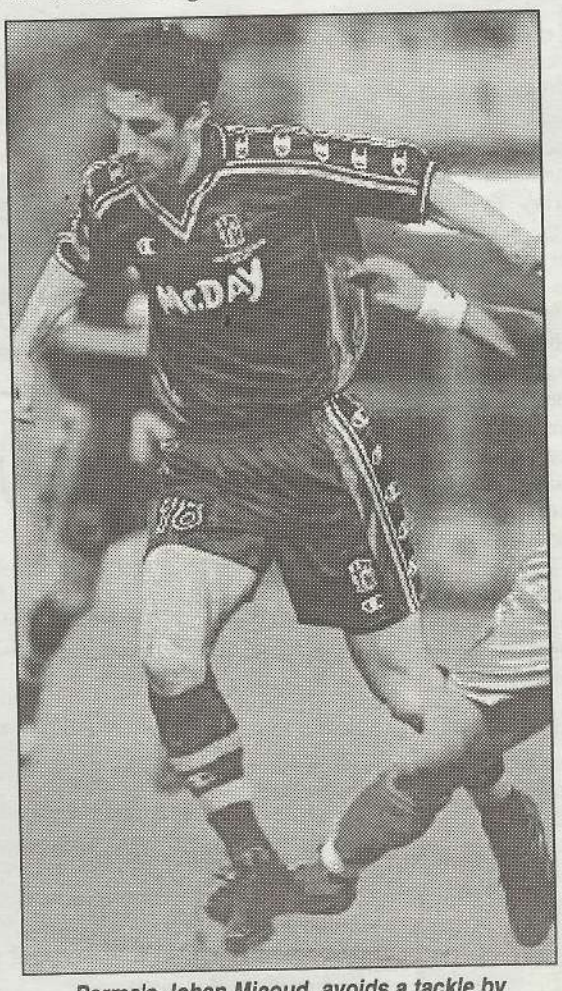
Brazilian Adailton put the home side in front in the 37th minute before an own goal by Bologna defender Giulio Falcone made it 3-1 at half time.

Salvetti scored his second of the match two minutes after the break and a Massimo Oddo penalty in the 72nd minute completed the scoring for Verona.

Giuseppe Signori (2) and youngster Giacomo Cipriani were also on target for Bologna.



AS Roma's captain Francesco Totti (right) glides past a challenge from AC Milan captain Paolo Maldini during their Serie A clash at the Olympic Stadium in Rome.



Parma's Johan Micoud avoids a tackle by Fiorentina's Angelo Di Livio during their Italy's Cup first leg final in Parma, northern Italy.

FIORENTINA 1 ATALANTA 1

Atalanta drew for the 14th time in the league this season.

Cristiano Doni scored the equaliser from the penalty spot in the 21st minute after Portuguese international Nuno Gomes had given Fiorentina the lead with a 13th minute header.

Both clubs are still in the hunt for a UEFA Cup berth.

INTER MILAN 1 LAZIO 1

A dramatic injury time equaliser from Frenchman Stephane Dalmat rescued a draw for Inter Milan.

Hernan Crespo's glancing header had given Lazio the lead in the 41st minute. Crespo is now the league's joint top scorer with AC Milan's Andriy Shevchenko on 24 goals.

JUVENTUS 1 PERUGIA 0

Frenchman David Trezeguet scored his 11th goal of the season in the 55th minute as Juventus recorded their 19th win of the season.

With two matches left Juventus are second on 67 points, four behind top of the table AS Roma and one point ahead of third-placed Lazio.

REGGINA 1 BARI 0

Chilean Jorge Vargas touched in a Francesco Stovini free kick after 50 minutes to clinch victory for Reggina.

Reggina are now fourth from bottom on 33 points, level with Lecce and Vicenza. Bari have already been relegated.

AS ROMA 1 AC MILAN 1

Vincenzo Montella came off the bench to score a 64th minute equaliser for league leaders AS Roma against nine-man AC Milan.

AC Milan took the lead with a Francesco Coco header on the stroke of halftime but had Kakha Kaladze and Serginho sent off midway through the second half. Roma's Vincent Candela was also dismissed.

UDINESE 0 NAPOLI 0

In a relegation fight, Napoli held Udinese to their second home draw of the season.

Both sides went forward throughout in search of the win that would have boosted their chances of survival.

Brescia	2	Vicenza	1
Fiorentina	1	Atalanta	1
Inter Milan	1	Lazio	1
Juventus	1	Perugia	0
Lecce	1	Parma	2
Reggina	1	Bari	0
AS Roma	1	AC Milan	1
Udinese	0	Napoli	0
Verona	5	Bologna	4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. AS Roma	**32**	**21**	**8**	**3**	**63**	**30**	**71**
2. Juventus	32	19	10	3	56	26	67
3. Lazio	32	20	6	6	61	34	66
4. Parma	32	16	8	8	49	22	56
5. AC Milan	32	12	12	8	54	43	48
6. Inter Milan	32	12	9	11	43	45	45
7. Atalanta Bergamo	32	10	14	8	37	31	44
8. Fiorentina	32	10	13	9	52	47	43
9. Bologna	32	11	9	12	46	49	42
10. Perugia	32	10	11	11	47	50	41
11. Brescia	32	9	13	10	40	39	40
12. Udinese	32	10	5	17	46	56	35
13. Vicenza	32	8	9	15	34	46	33
14. Lecce	32	7	12	13	36	51	33
15. Reggina	32	9	6	17	29	47	33
16. Napoli	32	7	11	14	31	48	32
17. Verona	32	8	7	17	36	57	31
18. Bari	32	5	5	22	29	63	20

ENGLAND ... ENGLAND ...

England's Paul Scholes (left) scores a goal past Mexico's Marco A Ruiz during their friendly soccer match at Pride Park in Derby.Scholes scored in the third minute of the match.

FLAWLESS ENGLAND CRUSH MEXICO 4-0

England produced a scintillating first half performance en route to beating Mexico 4-0 in an entertaining friendly, new coach Sven Goran Eriksson's fourth win in four games.

Superb goals by Paul Scholes, after just three minutes, Robbie Fowler and David Beckham had England deservedly 3-0 up after half an hour as their movement and superb passing created chances at will.

Ten England substitutions and five for Mexico made the second half a totally different game but, after Jose Abundis had put a penalty wide after a rare Mexican attack, Teddy Sheringham completed a thoroughly deserved victory with a stunning free-kick 15 minutes from time.

It was the perfect preparation for England, who play Greece in a World Cup qualifier in Athens on June 6, but will have done little for the confidence of Mexico, who now travel to South Korea to take part in the Confederations Cup.

England, continuing their policy of touring the country while Wembley is unavailable, got the perfect start as Scholes drove in his 12th goal in 34 internationals.

They doubled the lead in the 14th minute with a superbly created goal as Beckham slid a perfect pass into the path of the marauding Steven Gerrard on the right wing.

Gerrard's first-time cross was bundled in by Liverpool team mate Fowler, whose first international goal came in England's 2-0 victory over the central American side last time the two met in 1997.

Beckham was on fire, his every touch creating danger, and he capped a great display with an unstoppable 25 metre free-kick that dipped over the wall and beyond the flying dive of Sanchez.

It was just reward for England, who would have to go back a long time to find 45 minutes of such flowing, confident football, while a snap shot by Antonio De Nigris, well saved low down by Nigel Martyn, was the best a muted Mexico could offer in response.

Eriksson had said he intended to use the first half as his preparation for the Greece game and lived up to his promise by making no less than eight halftime substitutions -- Phil Neville, Emile Heskey and Fowler the only men to survive the cull.

Double Footballer of the Year Sheringham joined the fray 10 minutes into the second half and, with the Mexicans also making regular changes, the game lost its direction.

Mexico coach Enrique Meza, however, could take little encouragement as he prepares for a busy period of fixtures.

Two long-range efforts by Abundis, both comfortably saved by David James, and a similar effort from Pavel Pardo were the best his side could manage from a low-key display.

Former England manager Kevin Keegan speaks to the media at a press conference at Maine Road stadium.

Keegan is Man City Coach

Kevin Keegan has been named manager of first division club Manchester City eight months after quitting as England coach.

Keegan, 50, signed a five-year contract at Maine Road last week and a news conference was called for 5 p.m.

"I am delighted we have been able to bring Kevin to Maine Road," City chairman David Bernstein said.

"His talent together with our club's great potential promise an exciting and successful period ahead."

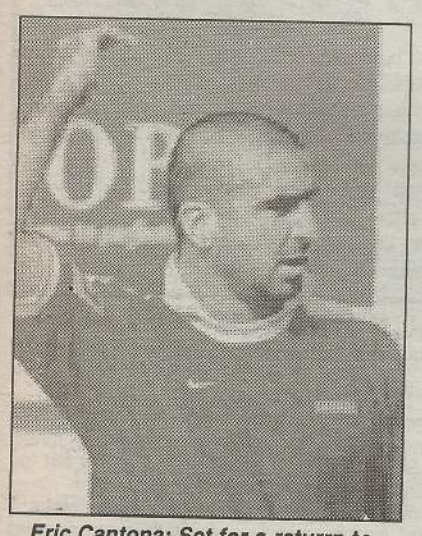
City, who were relegated from the premier league earlier this month after one season back in the topflight, sacked Joe Royle as manager last week.

If Keegan's character and past history are anything to go by, his first public appearance as City manager is likely to be an occasion full of emotion and positive pledges.

It will be in stark contrast to the final moments of his last act in football, when he resigned as Englandcoach after the team lost 1-0 to Germany in a World Cup qualifier last October.

He quit immediately after meeting with the England players, emerging from the dressing room to tell themedia he was not good enough to do the job.

CANTONA RETURNS TO MANCHESTER UNITED



Eric Cantona: Set for a returrn to Manchester United.

Frenchman Eric Cantona is set to make a return to the premier league champions Manchester United next season by taking a job on the coaching staff, newspapers have reported.

According to the Mail on Sunday, Cantona, who made a huge impact as a player after joining United in 1992, will take on a part-time role looking after United's youngsters in manager Alex Ferguson's last season in charge of the club.

Cantona left United four years ago when he retired from the game.

England goalkeeper Nigel Martyn saves a shot from Mexico's Jose M Abundis (centre) watched by Rio Ferdinand (left) in their friendly soccer match.

WORLD

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until June 20)

1	France	796	68=	Iraq	506	136	Rwanda	294
2	Brazil	794	70	Kuwait	503	137	Tahiti	284
3	Argentina	763	71	Canada	502	138	Solomon Isl.	281
4	Italy	748	72=	Bosnia-Herz	499	139	Tajikistan	275
5	Portugal	732	72=	Georgia	499	140	Ethiopia	273
6	Spain	724	74	Burkina Faso	497	141	Yemen	272
7	Czech Republic	722	75	Bolivia	496	142	Luxemburg	257
8	Netherlands	715	76	Senegal	493	143=	Andorra	255
9	Germany	711	77	Congo DR	489	143=	Liechtenstein	255
10	Paraguay	703	78	Liberia	485	145	Bangladesh	253
11	Yugoslavia	689	79	Albania	483	146	Tanzania	251
12	Romania	683	80	Togo	479	147=	Korea DPR	248
13	Mexico	680	81=	Cuba	478	147=	Maldives	248
14	England	673	81=	Macedonia FYR	478	149	Palestine	245
15	United States	666	83	Algeria	474	150	St Kitts & Nevis	242
16	Colombia	665	84	Indonesia	471	151	Antigua & Barbuda	240
17	Norway	663	85=	Guinea	469	152	Botswana	239
18	Russia	652	85=	Qatar	469	153	Surinam	236
19	Croatia	650	87	Namibia	458	154	Benin	232
20	Denmark	645	88=	Belarus	457	155	Sri Lanka	224
21	Sweden	643	88=	Haiti	457	156	Nepal	220
22	South Africa	634	90	Congo	454	157	Dominica	219
23	Poland	627	91	Syria	449	158	Bermuda	214
24	Scotland	624	92	Lithuania	448	159	Cape Verde Isl.	208
25	Slovakia	623	93	El Salvador	447	160=	Cayman Islands	207
26	Morocco	622	94	Oman	445	160=	Gambia	207
27	Ireland Republic	617	95	Armenia	444	162	Dominican Rep.	206
28	Saudi Arabia	615	96	Latvia	443	163	British Virgin Is.	202
29	Turkey	614	97	New Zealand	442	164	Kyrgyzstan	201
30	Belgium	612	98	Vietnam SR	437	165	San Marino	194
31	Tunisia	611	99	Gabon	436	166	Eritrea	192
32	Chile	607	100	Jordan	432	167	Chinese Taipei	184
33	Uruguay	601	101	N. Ireland	423	168	Mauritania	181
34	Austria	599	102	Moldova	421	169	Cambodia	171
35=	Egypt	595	103	Barbados	417	170	Chad	169
35=	Trinidad & Tobago	595	104	Kenya	416	171	Laos	168
37	Cameroon	592	105	Mali	412	172	Samoa	167
38	Slovenia	584	106	Kazakhstan	407	173	Vanuatu	159
39	Korea Rep.	580	107	Singapore	406	174	Cook Islands	155
40	Ukraine	573	108=	Malaysia	404	175	Guyana	153
41=	Cote d' Ivoire	571	108=	Uganda	404	176	Tonga	148
41=	Iran	571	110	Wales	398	177	Philippines	130
43	Bulgaria	570	111	Lebanon	396	178	Nether. Antilles	129
44	Japan	568	112	Venezuela	393	179	Cent. African Rep.	124
45	Ecuador	567	113	Libya	374	180	Guinea-Bissau	121
46	Jamaica	566	114	Turkmenistan	373	181	Macao	115
47	Israel	564	115	Mozambique	371	182	Bahamas	114
48=	Greece	558	116	India	370	183	Sao T.Principe	113
48=	Honduras	558	117	Azerbaijan	365	184=	Aruba	101
50	Nigeria	555	118	Bahrain	359	184=	Niger	101
51	Peru	553	119=	Madagascar	354	186	Mongolia	94
52	Angola	552	119=	Malawi	354	187	Belize	91
53	Hungary	551	121	Mauritius	352	188	Eq. Guine	88
54	Costa Rica	548	122	Fiji	349	189	Seychelles	81
55	Iceland	546	123	Faroe Islands	347	190	Brunei Dar.	80
56	Zambia	543	124	Panama	343	191	Djibouti	78
57	Finland	530	125	Sudan	338	192	Pakistan	71
58	Switzerland	527	126	St Vincent/		193	Nicaragua	69
59	Guatemala	526		Grenadines	331	194	Anguilla	65
60	Uzbekistan	525	127	St Lucia	327	195	PNG	63
61	Ghana	521	128	Hong Kong	319	196	Somalia	57
62	Thailand	517	129	Swaziland	316	197	Puerto Rico	51
63	China PR	515	130	Malta	315	198	US Virgin Islands	48
64	UAE	514	131	Sierra Leone	313	199	Guam	28
65=	Cyprus	510	132	Burundi	302	200	Turks & Caicos Is	22
65=	Estonia	510	133	Grenada	299	201	American Samoa	15
65=	Zimbabwe	510	134	Lesotho	297	202	Bhutan	14
68=	AUSTRALIA	506	135	Myanmar	296	203	Montserrat	11

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.*

Transfer News ... Transfer News ...

Newcastle quartet free to leave

Newcastle United have given free transfers to a quartet of players, including strikers Kevin Gallacher and Daniel Cordone.

Scotland striker Gallacher, who has been at Newcastle since October 1999, only made 14 starts last season after a series of injuries.

Argentine Cordone, signed at the start of last season from Racing Club, has struggled to claim a regular place in the team under manager Bobby Robson despite injuries to Gallacher and fellow striker Alan Shearer.

Defender Des Hamilton and striker David McMahon have also been given free transfers, the club said in a statement.

Kevin Gallacher

Terry Sherringham

Sheringham returns to Spurs

Manchester United striker Teddy Sheringham is set to return to his former club Tottenham Hotspur on a free transfer.

The 35-year-old England international signed a two-year contract worth around 3.5 million pounds with the north London club over the weekend, the Daily Telegraph said.

Sheringham, recently named Footballer of the Year by both his fellow players and journalists, is out of contract after four seasons at Old Trafford.

He is also thought to be keen to return to the London area to be closer to his 13-year-old son, Charlie.

Spurs manager Glenn Hoddle, who worked with Sheringham when he was England coach between 1996 and 1999, said last week he was keen to sign the former Millwall and Nottingham Forest striker, who joined United from Tottenham for 3.5 million pounds in 1997.

United signed Ruud van Nistelrooy from PSV Eindhoven for 19 million pounds last month, the Dutchman becoming the fifth international forward at the club along with Sheringham, Andrew Cole, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Dwight Yorke.

MORENO MOVES TO MILAN

Alaves striker Javi Moreno, who scored twice in the UEFA Cup final defeat by Liverpool, has signed for AC Milan, the Italian club said last week.

Milan said in a statement on their official website that Moreno had signed a four-year deal, keeping him at the San Siro until June 2005.

He scored 21 goals in 31 Spanish league games this season and a further six in the UEFA Cup, including two in the final.

"He is a good acquisition, among other things he won't cost much because he has a buy-out clause which is decisively low in respect of Spanish standards," Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani said.

Javi Moreno

Italian media reports suggested the buy-out fee was around $7.69 million.

Galliani said he expected Moreno to form an excellent partnership with Ukrainian Andriy Shevchenko, who heads the Serie A scoring charts with 24 league goals.

"He is a physically strong centre-forward who reminds me a little of Gerd Mueller. Based on what we have seen of him in recent months he should go together well with Shevchenko," Galliani said.

Gustavo Poyet

GALLAS IN, POYET OUT AT CHELSEA

Chelsea have signed French under-21 defender William Gallas for 6.2 million pounds, while Uruguayan midfielder Gustavo Poyet has handed the premier league club a transfer request.

Gallas has been signed from Olympique Marseille on a five-year contract, Chelsea's website said. The club have been following the 23-year-old player for two years after glowing reports from compatriots Marcel Desailly, his future team mate in defence, and then midfielder Didier Deschamps, now at Valencia.

Gallas's arrival makes it more likely that fellow French defender Frank Lebouef, linked recently with a move to Monaco, could soon be heading home.

Managing director Colin Hutchinson said: "It's no secret that Frank Leboeuf has said he'd like to finish his career in France if given the opportunity and now we have defensive cover that could be a possibility.

PALACE REJECT MERSON

Crystal Palace have turned down an approach from Aston Villa's former England midfielder Paul Merson to become player- manager of the first division club.

The manager's job at Selhurst Park is vacant after Alan Smith's sacking last month and the appointment of former Palace player Steve Kember as caretaker coach for the last two games of the season.

But Palace chairman Simon Jordan told the club's website: "I was approached by his agent around 10 days ago and was informed of Paul's desire to discuss becoming our manager.

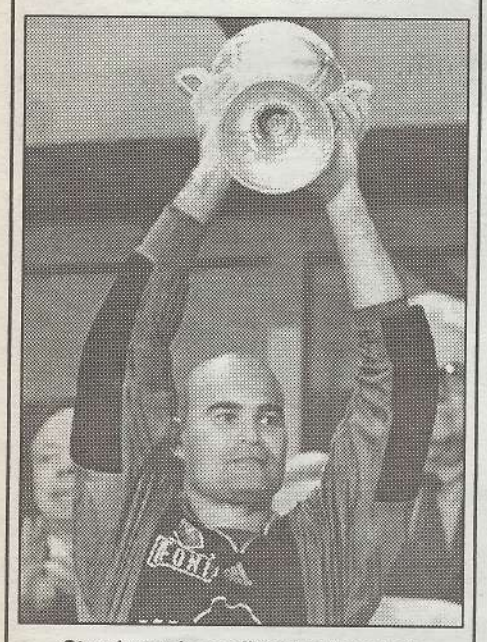
"But I said 'no thank you'."

WORLD

WORLD RESULTS ... WORLD RESULTS ...

FRENCH CUP

RELEGATED STRASBOURG SECURE FRENCH CUP



Strasbourg's goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert raises the French Cup after victory againstthird division team Amiens.

Paraguay's goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert offered Racing Strasbourg a consolation prize when he led them to their third French Cup victory against third division Amiens in a penalty shoot-out .

Chilavert, famous for scoring penalties and free-kicks, scored the winner for Strasbourg, who beat their lowly opponents 5-4 in the penalty shoot-out after two goalless hours of play.

The towering Paraguayan had earlier stopped an attempt by Amiens Togolese defender Yaovi Abalo, allowing his team to qualify for next season's UEFA Cup despite being relegated to the second division.

Only a little lack of experience and fitness stopped the third division side taking the lead.

Claude-Arnaud Rivenet had by far the best chance in regular time when he found himself alone in front of goal in the 53rd minute but shot wide.

Amiens striker Peter Sampil also missed excellent chances in front of goal in the 64th and 89th minutes.

But the more experienced Strasbourg players held on and could have won the match in extra time when star striker Pegguy Luyindula broke through in the 115th minute, only to be stopped on the line by a defender.

It was Strasbourg's third Cup victory after 1951 and 1966, while Amiens were playing in their first Cup final with a chance of becoming the first third division side to win the trophy.

Strasbourg also won the League Cup in 1997.

Despite the victory, most of Strasbourg leaeding players are expected to leave during the close-season.

But Chilavert hinted he would stay to help the Alsace side back into top flight next season.

"It's a very important cup to win for Racing and a good start on which to build a new team," he said.

GERMAN CUP

SCHALKE LIFT CONSOLATORY CUP

Schalke 04 gained consolation for a traumatic Bundesliga finale when two goals from Joerg Boehme gave them a 2-0 win over unglamorous Union Berlin for their first German Cup triumph in 29 years.

Midfielder Boehme scored from a free-kick in the 54th minute and a penalty four minutes later to end the fairytale story of local favourites Union, who had dreamed of becoming the first amateur team to get their hands on the trophy.

Schalkeís victory in the Olympic stadium came just one week after Bayern Munich just clinched the league title after an injury time goal sealed a 1-1 draw at Hamburg SV.

Bayern finished just one point ahead of Schalke.

Schalke had earlier fought back from two goals down for a spectacular 5-3 win over SpVgg Unterhaching and thought for a few minutes that they had won their first German league crown since 1958.

There was no such drama this time as Schalke, who had

Gerald Asamoah (middle) of Schalke 04 fights for the ball with Ronny Nikol (L) and Hristo Koilov (R) of Union Berlin.

not reached the German Cup final since they won it for the second time in their history in 1972, recovered from a sluggish start to take control of the game in the second half.

With Schalke already in the Champions League, former East Berlin club Union, who have just won promotion to the second division, will play in the UEFA Cup — a feat no German amateur club had ever achieved previously.

They came close to scoring in the 23rd minute when an angled shot from the corner of the box by striker Harun Isa bounced off the far post.

Their opponents then decided it was time to wake up and three minutes later Union goalkeeper Sven Beuckert had to punch out a dangerous effort from Polish defender Tomasz Hajto.

Schalke gradually took control but wasted another chance in the 35th minute when a thunderous volley from inside the penalty area by Denmark striker Ebbe Sand flew just over the bar.

Schalke needed a set piece to get out of trouble and Boehme put them ahead from a direct free kick 20 metres out.

Boehme, who has been called up by coach Rudi Voeller in the squad for Germany's next three internationals, then sealed victory from the penalty spot after Belgian striker Emile Mpenza was brought down by Beuckert.

Veteran midfielder Andreas Moeller thought he had inflicted further punishment on Union when he hit the back of the net in the 77th minute but he was ruled offside.

PRIMERA LIGA

MADRID CLINCH 28th TITLE IN STYLE

Real Madrid won their 28th Spanish league title in style, two goals from Raul and another magisterial display from Luis Figo helping them to a 5-0 victory at home to Alaves.

Raul set Real on their way on 21 minutes with a neat chip over keeper Martin Herrera and set up the second for Guti a minute later as Alaves looked in vain for an offside flag.

Figo then took over in the second half, sending in three superb right-foot crosses to set up simple headers for Fernando Hierro, Ivan Helguera and, once again, Raul.

The result gave Real an unassailable nine-point lead over outgoing champions Deportivo Coruna in second place.

Final league positions for teams finishing level on points in Spain are decided by head-to-head records before goal difference and as Real have taken four points off Depor this season they cannot be caught.

"It's a moment of great satisfaction," said coach Vicente del Bosque in a typical tone of understatement.

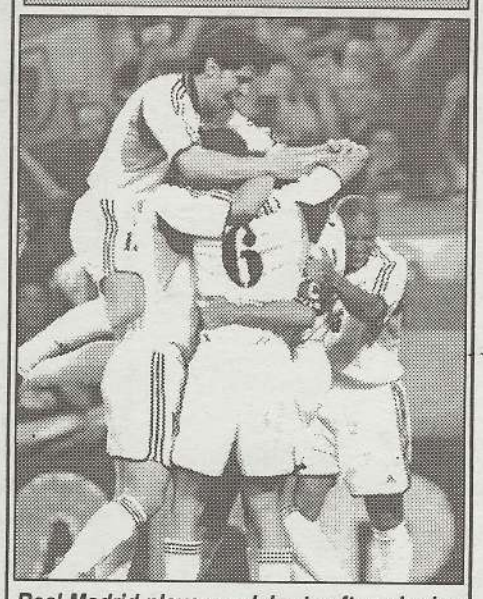
"I'm lucky to have this group of fantastic players."

A 75,000 full house at the Bernabeu were chanting "Ole!" throughout the second half in anticipation of the club's first league title since 1997.

When the final whistle was blown the crowd struck up with "We are the champions" as the team embarked on a long lap of honour.

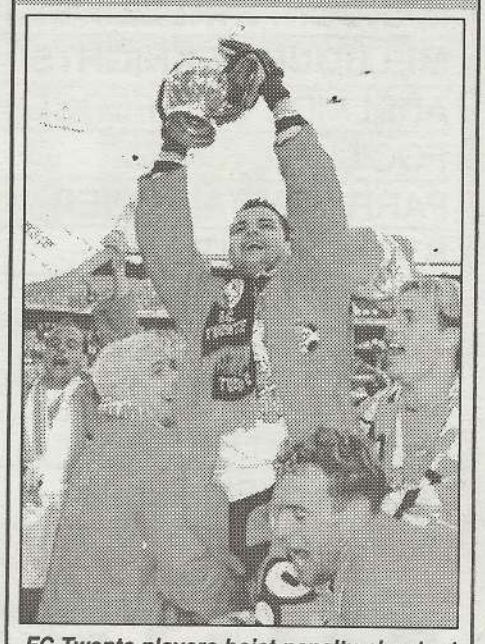
Thousands more fans were expected to welcome the team at around at the Cibeles fountain in Madrid, the traditional scene of celebrations for the club.

Athletic Bilbao	1	Malaga	3
Barcelona	0	Real Oviedo	1
Deportivo Coruna	1	Valladolid	2
Numancia	2	Espanyol	1
Racing Santander	1	Valencia	1
Real Mallorca	4	Rayo Vallecano	0
Real Zaragoza	1	Real Sociedad	1
Villarreal	2	Osasuna	0
Las Palmas	0	Celta Vigo	1
Real Madrid	5	Alaves	0



Real Madrid players celebrate after winning the Spanish League title for the28th time.

DUTCH CUP



FC Twente players hoist penalty shootout hero goalkeeper Sander Boschker.

TWENTE DASH PSV DOUBLE DREAM

Goalkeeper Sander Boschker stopped three penalties to seal Twente Enschede the Dutch Cup for the first time since 1977 after they won a penalty shootout with PSV Eindhoven 4-3 .

Twente were the underdogs against champions PSV, who were bidding to win the Cup and league double for the first time since 1988, the year they also won the European Cup.

But Twente, 12th in the Dutch league, defended well as the two teams finished 0-0 after extra time.

PSV seemed to be heading towards victory after PSV goalkeeper Ronald Waterreus, fit just in time for the Cup final, twice saved attempts by Jan Vennegoor of Hesselink and Jeroen Heubach to help PSV to a 3-1 lead in the shootout.

But John de Jong then failed to score for PSV. In the fifth round Waterreus went to the spot knowing that a goal would clinch the club for PSV but his low shot was stopped by his Twente counterpart.

When the shootout was forced into a sixth round Twente's Dennis Hulshoff kept his cool to score while Joonas Kolkka's shot was stopped by Boschker.

"It should never had come to penalties. We had the chance to decide the match in extra time," PSV coach Erik Gerets said.

PORTUGUESE FIRST DIVISION

Vitoria Guimaraes 1 Farense 0, Sporting 1 Maritimo 0, Alverca 2 Campomaiorense 1, Gil Vicente 3 Pacos Ferreira 1, Salgueiros 2 Belenenses 0, Aves 4 Benfica 4, Porto 4 Boavista 0, Beira Mar 3 Estrela Amadora 3, Braga 3 Uniao Leiria 5.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Boavista	**34**	**23**	**8**	**3**	**63**	**22**	**77**
2. Porto	34	24	4	6	73	27	76
3. Sporting	34	19	5	10	56	37	62
4. Braga	34	16	9	9	58	48	57
5. Uniao Leiria	34	15	11	8	46	41	56
6. Benfica	34	15	9	10	54	44	54
7. Belenenses	34	14	10	10	43	36	52
8. Beira Mar	34	14	7	13	45	49	49
9. Pacos Ferreira	34	12	12	10	47	38	48
10. Salgueiros	34	13	4	17	41	55	43
11. Maritimo	34	12	7	15	34	37	43
12. Alverca	34	12	7	15	45	52	43
13. Farense	34	10	9	15	37	47	39
14. Gil Vicente	34	10	7	17	34	41	37
15. Vitoria Guimaraes	34	9	9	16	41	49	36
16. Campomaiorense	34	7	11	16	29	58	32
17. Aves	34	4	10	20	31	68	22
18. Amadora	34	4	7	23	30	57	19

Celtic coach Martin O'Neil holds the Scottish Cup after beating Hibernian in the final at Hampden Park.Celtic have achieved their first treble in 32 years after also winning league and premiership tophies.

CELTIC COMPLETE CLASSY TREBLE

Martin O'Neill saw the final piece of his restoration on Celtic completed over the weekend as his team beat Hibernian 3-0 to win the Scottish Cup and secure their first treble in 32 years.

After Jackie McNamara put them ahead striker Henrik Larsson scored twice – taking his season's total to 53 – as Celtic added the Cup to the League Cup and premier league titles.

The last Celtic team to achieve the treble, in 1969, was the same side which won the European Cup two years earlier. But O'Neill's feat is even more remarkable because it has happened in his first season at the Glasgow club, who went through seven managers in nine years before him.

"It's gone fantastically well," declared O'Neill after the game at Hampden Park. "And the players deserve all the credit.

"When I came I did not think we would achieve what we have done this season.

"Simply closing the gap on Rangers was the target. We have restored a bit of pride and, domestically, we have been the strongest this season, but now we must keep it going."

O'Neill yet again dismissed reports that he was in line to replace Alex Ferguson as manager at Manchester United.

"It is sheer speculation," he said. "I am pleased and privileged to be manager at this club and there's a lot of work to be done here."

Hibernian, who had been hoping to end a 99-year wait for another Scottish Cup success, gave Celtic real problems in the early stages as Marc Libbra and John O'Neill went close.

But the turning point came in the 39th minute when McNamara, who had come on as a substitute for Lubomir Moravcik after 18 minutes, burst through on to a fine pass from Didier Agathe to steer a left-foot shot past goalkeeper Nick Colgan.

Larsson then killed the contest in the 47th minute, McNamara setting him up.

Larsson made it 3-0 in the 80th minute, stroking a penalty past Colgan for his 53rd goal of the campaign after he had been brought down in the area by Gary Smith.

Hibernian manager Alex McLeish could not hide his disappointment at the defeat but said his team – who finished third in the league to qualify for the UEFA Cup – could take confidence from their progress.

"I told the players they have had a great season and we have not actually celebrated getting into the UEFA Cup yet, so we will do that tonight," he said.

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

National Soccer League	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SOUTH MELBOURNE	30	21	6	3	70	24	69	15	12	2	0	41	9	15	8	4	3	29	15
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	30	18	7	5	80	40	61	15	10	3	2	46	21	15	8	4	3	34	18
PERTH GLORY	30	18	7	5	73	33	61	15	11	2	2	39	10	15	7	5	3	34	23
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	30	17	6	7	58	37	57	15	10	4	1	32	14	15	7	2	6	26	23
MARCONI STALLIONS	30	14	8	8	42	33	50	15	7	4	4	24	19	15	7	4	4	18	14
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	30	14	7	9	61	46	49	15	8	4	3	34	21	15	6	3	6	27	25
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	30	12	7	11	54	54	43	15	6	4	4	35	28	15	6	2	7	19	26
FOOTBALL KINGZ	30	12	7	11	52	52	43	15	7	3	5	26	25	15	5	4	6	24	27
PARRAMATTA POWER	30	13	3	14	42	44	42	15	6	2	7	22	24	15	7	1	7	20	20
SYDNEY UNITED	30	12	6	12	46	56	42	15	7	4	4	23	26	15	5	2	8	23	33
CANBERRA COSMOS	30	11	4	15	49	55	37	15	6	2	7	29	23	15	5	2	8	21	31
BRISBANE STRIKERS	30	9	8	13	52	56	35	15	7	4	4	33	25	15	2	4	9	18	31
NORTHERN SPIRIT	30	8	8	14	39	50	32	14	4	3	7	15	20	16	4	4	7	22	29
NEWCASTLE UNITED	30	7	9	14	37	56	30	15	5	2	8	13	21	15	2	7	6	24	32
EASTERN PRIDE	28	5	5	18	32	55	0*	14	3	5	5	17	21	15	2	0	13	15	32

Matches played against Carlton will result in all teams being awarded a 3-0 win and 3 competition points
*All points deducted due to breach of NSL Regulations — subject to appeal

PRELIMINARY FINAL

SOUTH MELBOURNE 2
(Boutsianis 27, Susa 63)

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 0

CAUTIONS:
Kohler (SO) 22, Kalogeracos (SM) 23, Juric (SO) 27, Augerinos (SO) 29, Cardozo 88.

RED CARD:
None

VENUE:
Olympic Park. Referee: Brett Hugo. Crowd: 6,664

TEAMS:

SOUTH MELBOURNE: Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Durakovic, (Panopoulos Trimboli 46), Coveny (Anastasiadis 82), Boutsianis, Vlahos, Kalogeracos (Lozanovski 66), Susa, Colosimo.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Bolton, Kohler, Baillie, Juric, Marusic (MacAllister 67), Halpin, Goutzioulis (Zorbas 78), Augerinos, Cardozo, Carle (Doumanis 67), Packer.

Sydney Olympic's Nick Carle (right) is halted in his tracks by South Melbourne striker and New Zealand International, Vaughan Coveny during their clash over the weekend.

THE GRAND FINAL

Wollongong Wolves v South Melbourne

Sunday, June 3 - Parramatta Stadium - Noon